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THE PLAYS
OF THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

P492

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OF
THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

EDITED BY
A. B. YOUNG, M.A., PH.D.
AUTHOR OF
'THE LIFE AND NOVELS OF THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK'

LONDON
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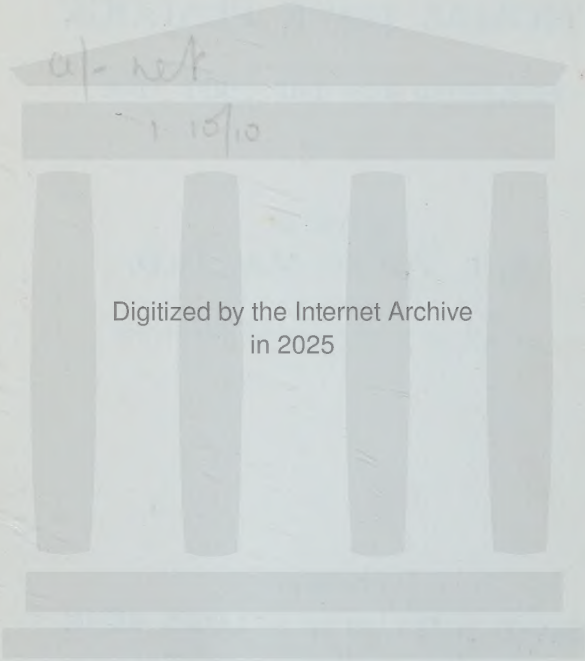

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PREFACE.

THE publication of three plays of Thomas Love Peacock nearly fifty years after his death requires a few words of explanation. In 1903 the Trustees of the British Museum purchased of Mrs. Edith Clarke some of his manuscripts, containing a large amount of unpublished matter. Of this little has been printed, except the poem 'Ahrimanes,' which was contributed by the writer to Vol. IV. of *The Modern Language Review*. Apart from the plays, it is doubtful whether publication would serve any useful purpose, since the other contents of the two volumes in the British Museum consist mainly of fragments that possess little literary value and interest. The appearance in print, however, of plays so thoroughly

characteristic of their author—both as regards style and subject-matter—will, it is hoped, appeal to the large and growing number of Peacock's admirers. None of the collective editions of Peacock's works make any reference to these plays. Indeed, the only allusion to them is a cursory notice of a few lines in Sir Henry Cole's 'Biographical Notes of T. L. Peacock,' of which ten copies were printed and privately circulated about the year 1875. Yet the fact of this poet and novelist being a playwright as well should not come as a complete surprise. Mrs. Clarke states in her short biographical notice of her grandfather that while on board the *Venerable* as far back as 1808 he used to write prologues for the plays acted by the sailors. We know also that he contributed a prologue and epilogue for Tobin's comedy of 'The Guardians,' which appeared on the stage eight years later. Towards the end of his life Peacock published a translation of the Italian comedy 'Gl'Ingannati,' while Lord Houghton has told us that during the same period he wrote the critiques of the opera for the *Globe*,

and subsequently for the *Examiner*, during the time that Fonblanque—a former friend of both Shelley and himself—was editor and proprietor. Mrs. Clarke states also that he seldom failed to take his seat at the opera during the season. Finally, he betrays a distinct liking for the stage in his novels, and has given an able and clear account of Greek drama and comedy in the 'Horæ Dramaticæ,' which he contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* in 1852 and 1857. The plays can easily be found by referring to the *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum, 1900-1905*, and are contained in Volume 36816. In all three instances the handwriting is holographic. It is easily legible, presenting an agreeable contrast in this respect to most documents from Peacock's pen. The first play—a prose farce consisting of two acts and ten scenes—is named 'The Dilettanti.' It occupies folios 46-101, these being written on one side only. The paper was made in 1803, but the play was probably put together considerably later. The style points to this conclusion, while

certain references to contemporary events and personages support such a conjecture. Angelica Catalani, for instance, is mentioned in the same breath with Raphael, Michael Angelo, &c., and it was not until 1806 that she came to London to make a great reputation in this country, where she remained until 1814. The play has many points of similarity to the first tale by its author, 'Headlong Hall,' which was originally published in 1816. An example may be given. Both the play and the novel have a violinist and a painter, who in each case quarrel as to the relative merits and demerits of their accomplishments. In particular, Chromatic with his Cremona in 'The Dilettanti' continually recalls the character with the same name in the novel, whose one delight is also his fiddle. Indeed, the characteristics not only of the first, but of all the Peacockian novels, are present in this farce. The *dramatis personæ* all have suggestive names—Tactic, Metaphor, Shadow, and the like. Further, the scene is laid at a country house, which suggested itself so often to Peacock's mind as the best place for bringing together his

motley group of individuals bent on ventilating their weird opinions on nearly every conceivable subject, and gratifying their whims, crotchets, and fads in nearly every possible direction. The same shafts of ridicule, too, as in the tales, aimed at anything and everything, are to be found here, pointed with the same dry humour and caustic wit. In one particular there is a slight improvement. The personages are sketched with skill, and not portrayed merely for the object of giving utterance to certain views. We have more action and far less criticism. The incidents in the play, although by no means numerous or complicated, are more so than in the novels. The second play—a poetical drama in blank verse, of two acts and nine scenes—is called 'The Circle of Loda.' It covers folios 102-27, these being written on both sides. The paper used was made in 1801, but, although an examination of the play has produced little evidence to show when it was written, the composition can be safely ascribed to any period from five to twenty years later. In 1801 Peacock was only sixteen years of age, and the

maturity of the style precludes the possibility of the drama dating from that early period. The subject-matter recalls to some extent Peacock's legendary romances, 'Maid Marian' and 'The Misfortunes of Elphin.' Absence of plot and deficiency in character-sketching are not so noticeable here as in most of the tales. Throughout Peacock has infused interest into the development of events. Of these the principal—around which everything revolves—is the struggle of Hidalvar between two women—Mengala and Rindane: he leaves the former, his wedded wife, and seeks with the latter other shores. Have we, possibly, in this drama yet another veiled allusion to a theme dealt with more than once by Peacock—the desertion of Harriet Westbrook by Shelley and the transference of his affections to Mary Godwin? The third play—a musical farce in prose and verse, consisting of two acts and four scenes—is entitled 'The Three Doctors.' It fills folios 128-149. written on both sides, and is followed by a rough draft which has notes and comments interspersed on other subjects. Written on paper marked

W. Turner & Son, it is attributed by Cole to a period not long before 1815. This statement is borne out, more or less, by the contents, which show in several instances great analogy with those of 'Headlong Hall' and 'Melincourt.' The scene is laid in Merionethshire; that of 'Headlong Hall' being placed in the adjoining county of Carnarvon. We know that Peacock first visited North Wales—where he met his future wife—in 1810, so that it is most likely the play was written some time after this date. The following points of similarity between the play and the two novels also deserve notice. Shenkin's way of speaking English with a Welsh accent recalls the Sexton's efforts in 'Headlong Hall.' O'Fir is picked out of the water in the same manner as Mr. Cranium is in the tale. Although Sir Peter Paxarett bears a resemblance only in name to the Sir Telegraph Paxarett of Melincourt, Humphry Hippy of Venison Hall is a faithful reproduction of Humphry Hippy of Hypocon House in the same tale, or *vice versâ*. Marmaduke Milestone, the landscape gardener,

exactly coincides with the character of the same name and vocation in Peacock's first novel. His plan for arranging Lord Littlebrain's park, which is torn to pieces in his portfolios, is similar to the two plans of the same gentleman's park which are shown by Mr. Milestone in 'Headlong Hall' to the Misses Chromatic, and which Peacock borrowed, although he has not admitted it, from Payne Knight's didactic poem 'The Landscape.' The main idea of the plot, however, has no counterpart elsewhere. It is skilfully worked out, while the rivalry between the three doctors shows Peacock's poignant satire at its best. His dislike to doctors is known to all acquainted with his works. He looked upon them as a means of accelerating death rather than prolonging life. A character in 'Melincourt' is called Killquick, who, needless to say, belongs to the medical profession. These hitherto unpublished works are thus not only noteworthy in themselves, but also interesting on account of showing us Peacock in a new light. Whatever else may be said, the reproach so often brought against his novels—as

well as against the early productions of his son-in-law, George Meredith, which show their influence—cannot be levelled with the same justice at these plays; for they are by no means devoid of plot, and the characters are clearly delineated. In one point especially, as has been shown, they recall the loosely connected dialogues which are known as the novels, in that they satirise the crazes and fads of the time. Replete with fun, written in a flexible style, and bearing the imprint of a scholarly discrimination and judgment, they clearly betray their authorship. In conclusion, the songs interspersed in the plays are, in many cases, noteworthy, and constitute a further proof of Peacock's excellence as a writer of lyrical poetry. Some of them have already been contributed by the writer to *Notes and Queries* (Tenth Series, X. 441; XI. 43).

A. B. Young.

THE DILETTANTI

A FARCE

IN TWO ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COMFIT.

TACTIC.

SIR HARRY FLOURISH.

METAPHOR.

CHROMATIC.

SHADOW.

O'PROMPT.

MRS. COMFIT.

MISS COMFIT.

EMMA.

MISS CADENCE.

MISS MELPOMENE DASHALL.

Waiter, Servants, Masks, &c.

SCENE: Warwickshire.

ACT I.

Scene I.—An Inn.

Enter Comfit, *disguised.*

Comfit. This disguise is the very thing. I defy any living soul to recognise me now. My wife and her dilettanti friends think I am snug in Ireland; and there are rare foolerics going on in my absence. I understand there's to be a masked ball at my house this evening. I detest the idea of a masked ball. Am I really old Gregory Comfit, the plodding man of business, that was once fortunate enough to have a wife without a particle of taste in her whole composition? Ah! those were happy times! But she took it into her head to pop off the perch, and I took it into mine to marry a girl, and be cursed to me! A fashionable girl! Poor dear delicate soul! she could not exist in the city: so I was obliged to leave my business, and purchase an estate in Warwickshire. She talked a great deal about the Avon,

and Shakespeare, and rural tranquillity. A pretty sort of tranquillity truly! First, she could not live comfortably till she had beautified our residence with all the absurdities of the world. I must turn it into a Gothic chateau, with Egyptian apartments and Grecian furniture; and an Italian garden, on the principles of the picturesque. And no sooner was this precious chateau finished, as she called it, in perfect taste, than I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of a new set of fashionable articles, a whole cargo of dilettanti! My house was turned into Bedlam! No rest for me by day or night, with them fiddling, and singing, and dancing, and painting; their private theatricals, and Italian recitations! Nothing to be heard of but Mozart, and Pleyel, and Signora Catalani! Raphael, Correggio, and Michael Angelo! Hamlet, Metastasio, and Orlando Furioso! I suspect too all is not as it should be between them and my wife: but this disguise will enable me to watch their proceedings while they think I am out of the way. Who comes here? Another dilettante, I suppose, on his way to my house. I must keep snug, but I shall look sharply after him as I can find opportunity. [*Exit.*

Enter WAITER, *showing in* TACTIC *and* O'PROMPT.

Tactic. Let me have breakfast immediately. (*Waiter bows and exit.*) Well, here we are at last in Warwickshire, safe for a time at least from duns and attornies.

O'Prompt. Ah! burn 'em both! They're cunning hands, and will ferret us out before we're aware. But there's one advantage. I always know a bailey when I see him. I have been pretty well used to the rascals ever since I left my father's house in Kilkenny to become a tragedy-player in Mr. O'Tagrag's company. Oh! I was a great loss to the stage. My Coriolanus was a fine piece of acting. My Polonius was a grand performance.

Tactic. Ridiculous.

O'Prompt. There you're out. My Polonius had nothing ridiculous about it. I made it quite another thing. Not a creature in the house had the impudence to laugh at me. They laughed a little, though, when I performed Richard the Third; but whether it was at me or my hump, for the life of me I could not tell.

Tactic. Absurd enough!

O'Prompt. That's just what I said to Mr.

O'Tagrag. Says I, 'It's absurd enough for me to stick a great oven on my shoulder to set the people grinning.' So I left it off next time.

Tactic. Mr. O'Tagrag is never out of your head.

O'Prompt. Oh! he was a great man! He was rather old and dingy, but that was just the thing for Othello.

Tactic. Which he acted to your Iago.

O'Prompt. Sure now and did I not play it divinely! Everybody said that my manner of drinking was perfectly natural.

Tactic. You will one day or other, my fine fellow, sit on the stool of repentance.

O'Prompt. I've too much manners to sit on the same seat with my master.

Tactic. You are eternally fancying yourself on the stage; and involving yourself and me in perpetual scrapes, by searching for what you call dramatic adventures.

O'Prompt. I love fun and despise danger. To be sure, I do sometimes get into a scrape; but I've a very happy knack of getting out again.

Tactic. Remember, I caution you in time.

O'Prompt. Ohone! Your money and your spirits seem to be both gone one way. You have

fallen in with a set of dirty old blacklegs, and are what the knowing ones call pigeoned.

Tactic. I am a miserable fellow! deep in love and deep in debt! With as little chance of finding my mistress as I have of escaping my creditors.

O'Prompt. Oh! your Southampton flame that you danced with so often, and never found out who she was. For anything you know to the contrary, she may be a Cheapside milliner from Cranbourne Alley.

Tactic. Impossible! She had so much beauty, modesty, and elegance——

O'Prompt. Those are three points in her favour; and there are just three against her.

Tactic. How so?

O'Prompt. The first is, you may never see her again. The second is, she may not care a whistle for you; and the third is, she may not be worth a thirteen.

Tactic. There is some reason in two of your arguments, but as to the third——

O'Prompt. That's the very best of all. Put her out of your head, and try if you can't pick up a thirty-thousand-pounder in this part of the world.

Tactic. What chance have I of success in such a pursuit?

O'Prompt. Oh! trust to that agreeable little phiz of your own to captivate the daughter of some rich country codger.

Re-enter COMFIT, *behind.*

Comfit (*aside*). Yes, yes; this is a dilettante, and that is his man. Deuce take their cunning looks. I dare say they are at this moment plotting my dishonour.

Tactic. Well, that is an affair in which chance may befriend me.

Comfit (*aside*). He means with my wife.

Tactic. If an opportunity present itself, it shall not be lost.

Comfit (*aside*). Opportunity——

O'Prompt. That's right; if you stand shilly-shallying with Fortune, you lose her for ever; attack her boldly, and she's yours.

Comfit (*aside*). Oh, the Irish rascal!

Tactic. But the old country codger may stand in the way.

Comfit (*aside*). That's me.

O'Prompt. Never mind an old codger: knock him down.

Comfit (*aside*). There's a bloodthirsty villain!

Tactic. But we must find the lady first, before we arrange our proceedings.

Comfit (*aside*). Confound your proceedings!

O'Prompt. And then let me alone to contrive: I'm a rare hand at a scheme.

Comfit. I'll cross your schemes. (*Aside.*)

Re-enter WAITER.

Waiter. Your breakfast is ready, sir.

O'Prompt. Faith, that's good news, and as soon as my master has done, I shall make free with the larder myself.

Tactic. Nay, O'Prompt, you need not be so ceremonious.

O'Prompt. Ceremonious—not at all. Only I make it a point of good manners never to feed before my master.

Tactic. As you please.

[*Exeunt* TACTIC *and* WAITER.

Comfit (*aside*). I must find out this fellow's scheme: I'll talk to him. (*Advances.*)

O'Prompt (*aside*). There's a mighty suspicious-looking chap! He has the air of a bum-bailey. I'll try and find out. A-a-hem!

Comfit. Good morning, my friend.

O'Prompt. Yours: yours.

Comfit (*aside*). What a sly-looking dog! I hope you like the air of Warwickshire?

O'Prompt. Pretty well. It's keen enough to get one a good wholesome appetite.

Comfit. I presume it's peculiarly attractive to your master—being a dilettante?

O'Prompt (*aside*). A dil-dil-dilettante! Botheration! what's that? Sh! it's the law term for a runaway debtor.

Comfit. There are several other gentlemen of his description in the neighbourhood.

O'Prompt (*aside*). Then I suppose he's come down with his pocket full of writs.

Comfit. At the house of one Comfit, an old country codger, that's only fit to be knocked down.

O'Prompt. Ah! the dirty old vagabond! I'll knock him down with all the pleasure in life.

Comfit (*aside*). Here's a pretty rascal!—May I ask to what branch of art your master is particularly partial?

O'Prompt (*aside*). He wants to pump me; but I'll be close.

Comfit. Painting is an elegant art.

O'Prompt. Very elegant.

Comfit. Music has charms.

O'Prompt. 'To soothe a savage rock, to soften oaks, to bend the knotted breast.' That's what you were going to say. Oh! how touchingly my sweet Shelah Granore used to recite that speech, when she acted Almeria in Mr. O'Tagrag's company! Yes, I like a touch on the harp.

Comfit. And perhaps you are fond of theatricals?

O'Prompt (*aside*). Och! he has found us both out. I'll dissemble with him.—No: I don't like theatricals at all, at all.

Comfit. No! I thought——

O'Prompt. You thought wrong. I never belonged to Mr. O'Tagrag's company. I never performed Macbeth, King Lear, or Coriolanus.

Comfit. I don't suppose you ever did.

O'Prompt. Hark ye, old one! Don't think to palaver me. I'm too cunning for you.

Comfit. How?

O'Prompt. I've smoked you: that's all.

Comfit. Smoked me!

O'Prompt. And we'll carry the day in spite of your teeth.

Comfit (*aside*). Unparalleled impertinence! How could the rascal discover me?

Re-enter TACTIC.

Tactic. O'Prompt!

O'Prompt. Your honour!—Ah! it's all up with us now. (*Aside.*)

Comfit. I think I know that face.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I dare say you do, and be hanged for a villainous tipstave!

Comfit (*aside*). It's the son of my old friend Tactic. Here is some mistake. He's no dilettante. I think I may venture to speak to him.

O'Prompt (*aside*). Now comes the writ, and the tap on the shoulder.

Comfit. Mr. Tactic, your most obedient.

Tactic. Sir, you have the advantage of me.

Comfit. In this disguise you don't recollect old Gregory Comfit, your father's most intimate friend.

Tactic. What, my old friend Comfit! How are you, my boy?

O'Prompt (*aside*). So! all's well again.

Tactic. I have not seen you this century.

Comfit. Your century is about two years.

Tactic. When I last saw you, you were flourishing in the city with a large fortune, a capital business, and a fine jolly old wife.

Comfit. And now I'm flourishing in the country with a young one.

Tactic. Indeed!

Comfit. A pretty bargain I've made of it. I've tied myself up to a girl—a dashing extravagant girl —that has filled my house with foreign fooleries, and a whole crew of dilettanti! But I'll tell you a secret: she thinks I am in Ireland now; and here I am, incog., to take observations.

Tactic. Jealous, by all that's fantastical!

O'Prompt (*aside*). Jealous! I'll have rare fun with this old merry-andrew.

Comfit. Then there's another plague—my daughter. Did you ever see her?

Tactic. Never. You kept her constantly at Mr. Carney's Academy to prevent her being infected with fashionable follies. I hope the plan succeeded.

Comfit. No, it did not. If my brains had not been addled, I should have known better than to send her to a boarding-school for that purpose. She thinks of nothing but dressing, dancing, and

masquerading. However, she'll get married soon, and then I wash my hands of her.

Tactic. Is she engaged?

Comfit. No. She has been bidden for several times by some of my wife's cronies; but I don't like to throw her away on a fellow with a thimbleful of brains that is only in love with the mopusses.

Tactic (*aside*). Mopusses!—Then you intend to come down with the Spanish?

Comfit. To the tune of twenty thousand.

Tactic. And that is all they court her for?

Comfit. Nothing more.

Tactic. Sordid scoundrels!

Comfit. Interested dogs!

Tactic. I hate a mercenary rascal.

Comfit. It's my greatest antipathy.

Tactic. Is your daughter pretty?

Comfit. Hum—she's well enough.

Tactic. Lively?

Comfit. Lively with a vengeance!

Tactic. Accomplished?

Comfit. So I'm told.

Tactic. Come, come, my old friend; you are too discontented. I am convinced, from what you say, your daughter is a very amiable girl.

Comfit. The deuce you are!

Tactic. I'm quite in love with your description.

Comfit. My description!

Tactic. You've set me on fire! She's not engaged, you say?

Comfit. No.

Tactic. I'll have her.

Comfit. You!

Tactic. I. I'm tired of a single life, and she's just the girl I want.

Comfit. I hope you'll ask my consent.

Tactic. Oh! that of course you can't refuse.

Comfit. Can't I?

Tactic. Refuse the sincerest friend you have in the world, the son of your old schoolfellow? Impossible!

Comfit. Why, I believe you're an honest fellow enough, as times go. I heard your father died and left you a considerable property.

Tactic. He did so.

O'Prompt (*aside*). But the devil a penny of it is left now.

Comfit. You are so abrupt.

Tactic. The only way of doing business. What say you?

Comfit. Why, see the girl first, and then if you like each other——

Tactic. Enough. Come along.

Comfit. Remember I'm incog. I can't introduce you.

Tactic. Never mind. Give me a letter and I'll introduce myself. Where is the house?

Comfit. Not five hundred yards off. I'll direct you.

Tactic. Take your breakfast, O'Prompt, and follow me.

O'Prompt. Faith, good wholesome advice, and I'll take it.

Tactic. You may just step in with me, and scratch off a letter; and then for love and victory!

[*Exeunt* COMFIT *and* TACTIC.

O'Prompt. My master's love for his unknown sweetheart won't be the death of him. He does not feel the tender passion so keenly as I do. It was very near being the death of me when I acted Romeo in Mr. O'Tagrag's company. Ohone! it goes to my heart when I think of it.

Song.

When first I began to talk big,
I chose the theatrical path, sir;
I put on a tragedy wig,
And flourished my dagger of lath, sir.
Love rais'd such a flame in my heart,
That I fancy it is not quite cool yet,
When in Romeo I strutted my part,
And Shelah Granore was my Juliet.

Her lip was so prettily curl'd;
Her heart than a turtle's was kinder;
But one day she walked out of the world,
And left her poor Romeo behind her.
In despair at the cruel control
Of fortune so fierce and so frisky,
I seiz'd on our tragedy bowl—
And fill'd up a brimmer of whisky.

Says I, 'This shall finish all strife'
(And my tears they fell faster and thicker),
'I'll soon put an end to my life—
But I'll first put an end to my liquor.'

The curtain drew up for Macbeth:
I paus'd between glory and sorrow—
Says I: 'I'm resolv'd upon death,
But I'll just put it off till to-morrow.'

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—AN APARTMENT IN COMFIT'S HOUSE. TWO CLOSETS IN FLAT.

Enter METAPHOR, *with a manuscript.*

Metaphor.
'Incumbent darkness bursts the trembling rays,
With smould'ring smoke, and adamantine blaze!'
That's a magnificent image!

Enter SHADOW *and* CHROMATIC.

Shadow. My dear Metaphor, I hope we do not intrude on your sublime meditations.

Metaphor. Amphion and Michael Angelo intrude! Impossible.

Shadow. What have you there?

Metaphor. It is part of the seventeenth canto of my poem on the Principles of Astonishment. Give me your candid opinion.

Shadow (*reads*).

'O'er the red lake the liquid flames aspire,
And wrathful witches drown themselves in fire.'

Astonishing indeed! This is a very glowing example of the 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' It shall be the next subject of my pencil. It affords ample scope for warm colouring.

Chromatic. And for impassioned music. I'll arrange it as a rondo.

Metaphor. Oh, gentlemen, you overwhelm me with your favours.

Shadow. Apropos, Metaphor, how comes on your love affair with Miss Comfit?

Metaphor. I have no reason to complain of the young lady's severity. But, between ourselves, the old codger is a little bit of a quiz.

Shadow. Egad, so he is; a quiz of the first water. But that is among friends.

Chromatic. What think you of Miss Emma?

Shadow. She's pretty and pleasing, but wants the grand essential.

Metaphor. That's a great blot in her composition.

Chromatic. A complete bar to perfection.

Shadow. Here come the ladies, with our Roscius, Sir Harry Flourish.

Enter SIR HARRY FLOURISH, MRS. COMFIT, MISS COMFIT, MISS CADENCE, *and* MISS MELPOMENE DASHALL.

Sir Harry. Music, painting, and poetry! We may expect some brilliant emanation from such a constellation of talents.

Mrs. Comfit. What is become of Emma? She is always moping by herself. She seems as indifferent to our masked ball as she is to our private theatricals. I am astonished at her want of taste.

Sir Harry. She never seemed much to admire my tragic exertions.

Metaphor. Nor my didactic poem.

Chromatic. She is totally insensible to the melody of my Cremona.

Shadow. And to my series of paintings from the Orlando Furioso.

Mrs. Comfit. None but superior minds can relish the beauties of art.

Miss Comfit. She actually prefers a forest to a landscape-garden, and a natural river to an artificial cascade.

Sir Harry. Prodigious!

Mrs. Comfit. How shall we contrive to kill the day?

Shadow. We may kill part of it in the temple of Ariosto, and hear the seventeenth canto of the Principles of Astonishment.

Metaphor. Sir, you make me proud.

Shadow. Shall I have the pleasure—— (*to Mrs. Comfit*).

Metaphor. May I presume—— (*to Miss Comfit*).

Chromatic. Permit me—— (*to Miss Cadence*).

Sir Harry. Allow me the happiness—— (*to Miss Melpomene*).

Metaphor.

Then let the muse the wond'rous tale pursue
Of fairies bathing in ethereal dew,
Of elves and giants startling all beholders,
And men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter EMMA.

Emma. I believe every heart in the house is lighter than mine. I am mortified by the conscious-

ness of dependence, and derive little pleasure from the splendour that surrounds me. Since the death of my dear unfortunate father small indeed has been my portion of happiness. Would my uncle were returned! My new aunt and my thoughtless cousin delight only in dissipation and frivolity.

Song.

How blest is the lot of the poor village maiden,
Who breathes not a sigh for the pageants of wealth;
For whom ev'ry flow'ret with sweetness is laden,
Whom the fields crown with pleasure, the breezes with health!
Though the Indies may boast of their far-spreading treasures,
Her heart for their sake would not tempt her to roam;
She thinks not of more than the innocent pleasures,
The simple delights and endearments of home.

Oh! had I been plac'd in some hamlet surrounded
By green-waving meadows and soft-flowing rills,
How lightly my steps through the valleys had bounded,
And courted the zephyrs that breathe on the hills!

Be mine the sweet pleasures that charm in reflection;
I prize not the joys of the proud-swelling dome;
May my dwelling be cheered with the voice of affection,
And the simple delights and endearments of home.

My Southampton lover, I suppose, no longer thinks of me. I was silly enough to conceal my name; but I intended to have revealed it at last, and my sudden departure prevented me. Heigho! I wish I could forget him.

Enter TACTIC, *behind.*

Tactic. Found the door open, and nobody in the way; so walked in. Who is this?

Emma. He was rather volatile, but I believe he was honourable.

Tactic. Impudence befriend me! (*advances*). Madam, I have the honour—— My Southampton charmer, by all that's miraculous! (*aside*).

Emma. Heavens! 'tis himself.

Tactic. Yes, my angel, it is himself indeed; poor Dick Tactic, whom you once condescended to smile upon, and then left to hang himself.

Emma. I hope you will acquit me of intentional

deception, when I assure you that my departure was entirely unforeseen, and that I most sincerely rejoice to meet you again.

Tactic. My dear, dear girl! you more than repay me for all my sufferings. I have travelled through the three kingdoms in search of you.

Emma. Indeed!

Tactic. But with very little hope of finding you, for you never would tell me your name.

Emma. You shall know it now—Emma Comfit.

Tactic (*aside*). This is glorious luck!—I guessed as much.

Emma. Really!

Tactic. Mr. Comfit and I are old friends; I met him in Dublin, he told me some particulars of his family, and I knew you by his description.

Emma. I can scarcely tell how to believe you. This is a most extraordinary story.

Tactic. This letter will confirm it.

Emma. It is not directed.

Tactic. My impatience made me consider a direction needless. The contents are sufficient.

Emma (*reads*). 'Dublin, June the eleventh. My dear girl,—The bearer, Mr. Tactic, is a young man of family and fortune, who has my full permis-

sion to pay his addresses to you.—Yours, with great affection and violent haste, Gregory Comfit.'—This is astonishing.

Tactic. I hope it is not unwelcome.

Emma. My duty and gratitude to the writer of this letter forbid that anything from him should be unwelcome. You have taken me by surprise; permit me to retire for the present, and if my good opinion be your aim, I think from present appearances you have some claim to it. [*Exit.*

Tactic. Bravo! Dick Tactic, you're in high luck, my fine fellow! This is hardly fair dealing, by the bye. If I had leisure to reflect I should be rather ashamed of myself. But I have not time for repentance now. I must put it off till after I'm married.

Enter O'PROMPT.

Tactic. I desired you to wait without.

O'Prompt. Faith, and I desired myself to walk in. You may think it mighty agreeable, while you are making love in the house, for me to be kicking my heels at the door, but there are two opinions on that subject.

Tactic. Well, I am too happy to be angry. O'Prompt, you dog, give me joy.

O'Prompt. What, have you fascinated the heiress?

Tactic. The heiress turns out to be the identical girl whom I sought so long in vain; and now she is mine, and her fortune is mine, and the whole world is mine!

O'Prompt. Bravo! Hurrah!

Tactic. I am ether—I am essence—I could jump over Mount Atlas! Follow me, Mr. O'Tagrag!

[*Exit.*

O'Prompt. All in good time. If I stay here a little longer I may meet with an adventure. Somebody's coming. Here's a closet. As I used to say when I acted little Falstaff in Mr. O'Tagrag's company, 'I'll ensconce me behind the arras!' (*Goes into the closet.*)

Enter METAPHOR *and* MISS COMFIT.

Metaphor. How long, dear cynosure of my affections, will you continue to sport with the feelings of your devoted admirer?

O'Prompt (*peeping out*). A mighty fine-spoken prig!

Miss Comfit. Oh, Mr. Metaphor, if I could but

believe one half of what you say!—but you poets are such dealers in fiction.

Metaphor. Believe it! my dear Miss Comfit.

O'Prompt (*aside*). Och! this is my master's flame. I begin to smell a rat.

Metaphor. Put me to the proof. Command, and I obey.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I'll put you to the proof presently!

Miss Comfit. But suppose I should be weak enough to consent to elope with you, would you not repent your engagement?

Metaphor. Doubt that the sun is fire——

Miss Comfit. Spare your protestations. I will even run all risks.

Metaphor. My dear, dear angel!

O'Prompt (*aside*). Oh the double-fac'd vixen!

Miss Comfit. Now hear my plan.

O'Prompt (*aside*). There are more hearers than one.

Miss Comfit. At the masquerade this evening I shall assume the character of a Sultana.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I shall remember.

Miss Comfit. Do you appear as a Turk.

O'Prompt (*aside*). Very good.

Miss Comfit. Come to me in silence, press my hand three times, and we will go off together.

O'Prompt (*aside*). Here's a conspiracy!

Metaphor. But what necessity——

Miss Comfit. It will be so romantic.

Metaphor. As you please. Give me but yourself, I care not how or where.

Miss Comfit. Till then, farewell (*holding out her hand, which he kisses passionately. Exit* MISS COMFIT).

Metaphor. Farewell, my most adorable Sultana!

O'Prompt (*aside*). Now comes my cue. (*As* METAPHOR *is going off* O'PROMPT *interposes himself.*) Sir, your most obedient.

Metaphor. Have you any business with me, friend?

O'Prompt. Only just to request a little favour. Will you oblige me by walking into that closet?

Metaphor. Prythee, fellow, cease your impertinence, and stand out of the way.

O'Prompt. Will you walk into the closet?

Metaphor. No, rascal!

O'Prompt. Then, by my soul, I'll make you!

Metaphor. Make me, monster!

O'Prompt. Yes, jewel! March! (*forcing him towards the closet*).

Metaphor. What do you mean, ruffian?

O'Prompt. Oh, be easy!

Metaphor. Unhand me, thief!

O'Prompt. Keep yourself cool.

Metaphor. Infamous assassin!

O'Prompt. Arrah, behave yourself! (*locks him in*). He's lodged. That was neatly managed. Ah! kick away! I'll just make fast the outer door, and then you're safe till the morning. [*Exit with the key.*

SCENE III.—THE INN.

Enter COMFIT.

Comfit. I have half a mind to make one at the dilettanti masquerade; and I have half a mind to stay where I am: so that balances the matter. Perhaps Tactic will be here presently. Let me consider. Suppose I stay: I don't think there can be much harm in that. Suppose I go: I'm not sure there can be no harm in that. Suppose I go in to dinner: I am sure there can be no harm in that, so I'll consult my bottle-counsellor. [*Exit.*

Enter TACTIC *and* O'PROMPT.

Tactic. Your intelligence drives me to desperation: such deception is incredible.

O'Prompt. Don't let a woman ruffle your temper. To be sure the twenty thousand——

Tactic. Paltry consideration! No, sir; it is herself whose loss I regret: she seemed such a pattern of modesty, innocence, and candour— 'sdeath! I'll blow my brains out!

O'Prompt. Don't be in a hurry about that: 'the times have been, that when the brains were out, the man would die'; as I used to say when I acted Macbeth in Mr. O'Tagrag's company.

Tactic. The devil take Mr. O'Tagrag!

O'Prompt. Och! then he'd take the very cleverest manager that ever drilled a flourishing company of theatrical ladies and gentlemen.

Tactic. Is this a time, sir, for your buffoonery, when your master's honour and happiness are at stake?

O'Prompt. Buffoonery! Now that is not civil of you. But you had better take my advice: personate the Turk, carry off the lady, and leave the rest to fortune.

Tactic. It shall be so. But how to procure the dress and obtain admission?

O'Prompt. Let me alone to manage that.

Tactic. Come along, then; we have no time to

lose. Oh woman! woman! inconstant, treacherous woman! [*Exit.*

O'Prompt. A very tragical exit! If he had struck his forehead with his fist, and stamped a little harder on the ground, it would have been complete. Let me try if I can't do it better. Oh woman! woman! inconstant, treacherous woman!

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—AN ILLUMINATED APARTMENT. MASKED BALL.

MISS COMFIT, *as a Sultana, advances to the front of the stage. Enter* TACTIC *as a Turk; he takes her hand and leads her off. A party of troubadours advances, and sings the following trio.*

With knights, and maids, and loves, and arms,
And countless deeds, and war's alarms,
Our mystic song the hearer charms,
While the ev'ning bells ring merrily.
Of magic groves and vales we sing;
Of Merlin, and the Elfin-king,
Of sprites that o'er the witch-grass spring,
While the ev'ning bells ring merrily.

Of deep enchantments strange and strong,
Of sweetest notes of fairy song,
That float the haunted air along,
While the ev'ning bells ring merrily.

[*Dancing renewed. The scene closes.*

SCENE V.—AN APARTMENT IN THE INN.

Enter TACTIC *and* MISS COMFIT, *both in their masquerade dresses, followed by* O'PROMPT.

Miss Comfit. Mr. Metaphor! my dear Mr. Metaphor! whither are you leading me?

Tactic. It is not my intention, madam, to lead you any farther.

Miss Comfit. Heavens! that is not Mr. Metaphor's voice!

Tactic. No, madam! Your inconstancy, your duplicity, have forced me to this proceeding; and behold to your confusion——

Miss Comfit. In the name of heaven, sir, who are you? (*both unmask*).

Tactic. I am thunderstruck!

O'Prompt. What wonder now?

Tactic. This is one of your mischievous tricks, you stage-struck blunderer!

O'Prompt. How! is not this your Southampton flame?

Tactic. No, sir! This lady is a perfect stranger to me.

O'Prompt. Here's an incident!

Tactic. Madam, I beg ten thousand pardons, but——

Miss Comfit. Sir, all the pardons you can beg will never compensate the injury you have done me. (*Bursts into tears.*)

O'Prompt. Here's a dilemma.

Enter COMFIT.

Comfit (*aside*). Heyday! what is the matter here? Surely that is my daughter, and this is Mr. Tactic. She's in tears. I'm strangely perplexed—— Mr. Mustapha Tactic! what is the meaning of this?

Tactic. Zounds, sir! I can't tell.

Comfit. Mr. O'Prompt! what does all this signify?

O'Prompt. Devil burn me, if I know.

Comfit. So! Fair Sultana! may I presume to inquire the occasion of your tears?

Miss Comfit. What's that to you, you meddling old ragamuffin? [*Exit.*

Comfit. A pleasant salutation! Mr. Tactic! will you have the goodness to explain this circumstance?

Tactic. Sir, it's impossible to explain what I don't understand. [*Exit.*

Comfit. Mr. O'Prompt! will you do me the favour to clear up this mystery?

O'Prompt. Oh, bless your old soul! you must not apply to me; for, by the faith of St. Patrick, I'm bothered completely. [*Exit.*

Comfit. Am I asleep or awake? Do I stand on my head or my heels? I am lost in confusion and darkness. One thing is clear enough, there they are all gone off, and the best thing I can do is to go after them as fast as possible. [*Exit.*

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—AN APARTMENT IN COMFIT'S HOUSE.

Enter TACTIC *and* EMMA.

Emma. And could you really suspect me of such ungenerous conduct?

Tactic. What could I suppose? I was not aware that there were two Miss Comfits.

Emma. You have been unfortunate in your choice. My cousin has a large fortune, and I am a mere dependent on my uncle's bounty. My father died insolvent, and bequeathed me nothing but his tears.

Tactic. My dear Emma! I love you only for yourself. Hang riches! To be sure they are rather convenient according to the present fashion; but I would not resign my Emma for all the mines of Potosi. But tell me, my sweet girl, can you love me truly?

Emma. I cannot answer that question. My uncle's letter styled you a young man of family and fortune; and those are such powerful inducements to the generality of modern females, that I fear, should I reply in the affirmative, my motives might be liable to suspicion.

Tactic. Most amiable girl! I can soon relieve you from that embarrassment. It is true, at my father's death I possessed a considerable property; but thanks to a set of very honourable swindlers, I am now as poor as a Neapolitan lazzarone.

Emma. Is it so indeed? Or is this merely a stratagem to discover my real sentiments?

Tactic. Fact—on my honour.

Emma. Your candour and generosity charm me, but——

Tactic. Oh! do not kill me with that freezing word.

Emma. Why should I hesitate? I confess—I acknowledge—— (*turns aside, and holds out her hand to him*).

Tactic. I think I understand you, but speak, my angel, let your voice confirm me. What shall I think?

Emma. Anything—what you will—I cannot say more at present. Adieu! [*Exit.*

Tactic. Gone! That was rather a sudden departure; but I am now convinced she loves me, and, so far, I am satisfied. Let me consider. They say, 'When poverty comes in at the door——' What have I to do with musty proverbs? All may go well yet. I must explain myself to old Comfit, and perhaps, as he rolls in riches, he may be persuaded to give his niece a little portion, just enough to purchase a small farm among the mountains of Wales. That would be rather a singular termination

of my fashionable career, but the transformation of a London buck into a Welsh farmer will not be the most extraordinary metamorphosis in the annals of Cupid. But I must choose a better place for my deliberations. One might almost fancy this house an enchanted castle, for Comfit and O'Prompt have both crept into it in search of adventures. I dare say they will get into some ridiculous scrape; but, as I am not at present in much humour for mirth, I shall peaceably leave them to its exclusive enjoyment. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—ANOTHER APARTMENT IN COMFIT'S HOUSE. THE SAME AS THE SECOND SCENE OF THE FIRST ACT.

Enter O'PROMPT.

O'Prompt. My master has been abusing me for what he calls my rascally blunders; but running away with a twenty-thousand-pound prize, instead of a girl that's worth nothing at all, was no such very terrible bull if properly considered. I've found out what 'dilettante' means; it means a man with a taste. I think I'm a little bit of a dilettante myself. There's my prisoner kicking away in the

closet. He has had a pleasant time of it since yesterday afternoon. I think I'll let him out. Stop! I hear footsteps. I'll hide myself 'till the coast is clear, and perhaps I may have a little more fun with my bird in the cage (*goes into the other closet*).

Enter MRS. COMFIT, *crossing the stage.*

Mrs. Comfit. What noise is that? (*Metaphor kicks against the closet door; she goes up to it.*) Who's there?

Metaphor (*within*). Oh, my dear Mrs. Comfit! for heaven's sake release me!

Mrs. Comfit. Mr. Metaphor! in the name of wonder how came you here?

Metaphor. An Irish rascal locked me up. I have been here all night.

Mrs. Comfit. Astonishing!—the key is taken away.

Metaphor. Let the lock be picked. I am half dead.

Mrs. Comfit. Poor soul! I have another key that will fit this lock. I shall be back in a few minutes. [*Exit.*

O'Prompt (*coming from the closet*). Now it's

my turn to talk to him. Mr. Metaphor! my dear jewel! Arrah! how are you?

Metaphor. Is that you, you Irish murderer?

O'Prompt. I hope you slept well, and were none the worse for your supper.

Metaphor. Villain! I have vowed vengeance, horrible vengeance!

O'Prompt. Ha! there's old Comfit in his disguise sneaking along under the wall. Och! it's hatching here (*touching his forehead*). Hark ye, Mr. Jack-in-the-box!

Metaphor. What now, monster?

O'Prompt. Keep yourself perfectly silent for two minutes, and I'll unlock the door.

Metaphor. Very well, ruffian!

Enter COMFIT.

Comfit. I cannot yet comprehend the mystery of last night. I wish I could be satisfied with respect to my wife. If I thought she would be constant to her old spouse, I think I could get the better of my antipathy to the dilettanti. I have ventured to enter the premises. If I am seen I shall not be recognised. I may perhaps meet with something to confirm or destroy my suspicions. O'Prompt! are you there?

O'Prompt. Hush! take this key: walk up to that door and unlock it without speaking a word.

Comfit. Why, what——?

O'Prompt. Your wife has shut up a dilettanti in the closet.

Comfit. Ha!

O'Prompt. Don't be in a passion—I tell you it's a fact (*passes the closet door slily*). Now, Mr. Metaphor!

Comfit. I'll dilettante him! (*Unlocks the door; Metaphor rushes from the closet flourishing a violin, which he cracks over Comfit's head.*)

Metaphor. Take that, scoundrel, as the reward of your insolence! [*Exit hastily.*

Comfit. Stop him! Now, what was that for?

O'Prompt. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Comfit. What are you laughing at, you great baboon?

O'Prompt. This is a new dilettante method of playing the fiddle.

Comfit. This was your contrivance, and by——

O'Prompt. Be quiet. How should I know what tune the gentleman intended to play? I dare say there are a great many more dilettanti-traps in that closet. I'll go in and see.

Comfit. Stay where you are: I'll go in myself. (*Goes into the closet.* O'PROMPT *locks the door.*)

O'Prompt. There you are 'till your wife sets you at liberty. She's coming. I'll hide myself again (*goes into the other closet*).

Re-enter MRS. COMFIT, *with a key.*

Mrs. Comfit. This adventure of Mr. Metaphor surprises and alarms me exceedingly. I must have it searched into (*unlocks the door*). Come forth, my dear Mr. Metaphor!

Comfit (*coming from the closet*). Damn Mr. Metaphor, madam!

Mrs. Comfit. Help! help! John! Richard! Peter! Thomas!

Comfit. Heyday! I must not be known yet, so I'll take to my heels. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Comfit. Help! help!

O'Prompt (*coming from the closet, and catching her in his arms*). Madam, don't be alarmed.

Mrs. Comfit. Hands off, ruffian! Thieves! thieves!

O'Prompt. Oh, by my troth! then I must make my escape. [*Exit.*

Enter SIR HARRY FLOURISH, CHROMATIC, METAPHOR, MISS CADENCE, *and* MISS MELPOMENE DASHALL.

Omnes. What's the matter?

Mrs. Comfit. There are thieves in the house. Where are all my servants? John! Thomas! Richard! Peter! (*Enter servants.*) Search the house through, and if you detect any strangers, apprehend them immediately. [*Exeunt Servants.*

Miss Melpomene. Thieves, do you say?

Mrs. Comfit. If not, I know not what they were. The whole affair is a mystery to me. But I hope my servants will bring them to account.

Sir Harry. What have they done?

Metaphor (*apart*). Say nothing about the closet adventure.

Mrs. Comfit. One of them frightened me out of my life, and the other caught me in his arms and desired me not to be alarmed.

Sir Harry. Amazing effrontery! Shall I join the pursuit?

Mrs. Comfit. Oh! by no means, Sir Henry. If they remain in the house, they will certainly be taken; and if they have quitted it, I shall rejoice to hear no more of them.

Metaphor. So shall I, most heartily (*aside*).

Sir Harry. At all events, you may be secure from further apprehension. Where is Mr. Shadow?

Chromatic. I left him painting the battle of Orlando and Rhodomont.

Sir Harry. A little gloom still seems to hang over the company. A song from Miss Cadence would dispel it. May I request——

Miss Cadence. If Mr. Chromatic will accompany me——

Chromatic. Most willingly. My Cremona is in the closet (*opens it*). Ha! it has disappeared!

Miss Melpomene. Bless me!

Chromatic. What can have become of it?

Metaphor (*aside*). That you can find out if you can.

Sir Harry (*picking up a fragment*). I believe, Mr. Chromatic, I can help you to a piece of it.

Chromatic. Horror and death! Some desperado has ruined me. Oh! my dear, dear Cremona!

Sir Harry. Lamentation, my dear friend, will not mend your violin. If you will accompany Miss Cadence, I can help you to another.

Chromatic. Another, Sir Harry! Never shall my fingers draw a sound from another. Ah! never

will my ears again be ravished with such richness of tone! It was without a parallel in the United Kingdoms, excepting only that of Signor Arietto.

Miss Melpomene. I would advise you to make the same vow with regard to Signor Arietto's violin, that Ferrari made with regard to the helmet of Mambrino.

Chromatic. 'Sdeath, madam! what is the helmet of Mambrino in comparison with my Cremona? Let me carefully collect the precious relics, and retire to bewail in solitude my irreparable loss! [*Exit.*

Sir Harry. Ha! ha! ha! poor Chromatic! But let me hope this little misfortune will not deprive us of the pleasure of a song from Miss Cadence.

Miss Cadence. If you insist upon it, Sir Harry——

Song. MISS CADENCE.

By the river's lonely shore,
In the forest's deepest shade,
Where the winds of midnight roar,
Let my leafy bed be made.

None o'er me shall shed a tear,
None o'er me shall breathe a sigh;
Save the waters murmuring near,
Save the breezes rustling by.

Mrs. Comfit. Admirable indeed! But we must separate to make ourselves perfect for this evening's Hamlet.

Sir Harry. I must study the last act a little more, and shall then make my entrée with confidence.

Mrs. Comfit. You must exert yourself to the utmost, Sir Harry. All the beauty and fashion of the vicinity will constitute our audience. Miss Melpomene will not fail to do justice to the character of Ophelia.

Miss Melpomene. Oh, madam! you overrate my poor abilities. With such a Gertrude as Mrs. Comfit, Ophelia will be scarcely noticed.

Sir Harry. Ladies, your most devoted. For a little while, farewell, the sweet Ophelia.

Miss Melpomene. Adieu, most noble Hamlet!

Sir Harry. To be, or not to be, that is the question.

Miss Melpomene. Oh help him, you sweet heavens! [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—ANOTHER APARTMENT IN COMFIT'S HOUSE. FOLDING DOORS IN FLAT. A SOFA, ETC. SHADOW DISCOVERED PAINTING.

Shadow. Yes! this will certainly be my chef-d'œuvre. The countenance of Rhodomont is in perfect gusto, and Orlando is an excellent figure. The splashing of the water is admirable, and the foam is absolute nature. Ne salta in aria l'onda, e il lido geme. Oh, divine Ariosto! Where's my vermilion? Oh, it's in the next room. I must fetch it (*going, turns round*). Beautiful! (*exit through the folding-doors*).

O'Prompt (*without*). I'll distance you, rascals! (*Enters and runs to the opposite door.*) Fast! Whew! och! I'll defend myself manfully. What's this? (*looking at the picture*). There's a bridge without a railing. I suppose that's a dilettante bridge. It would be thought a bit of a bull to build such an one at Dublin. It's no wonder the two fellows tumbled off. Fighting in the water! I should think it mighty agreeable to be ducked and beaten at once. There's a lady, too: she looks perfectly cool on the occasion. Sure, now, she does not mean to go over that dirty little narrow bridge on

horseback? I wonder what it's all about. It's not about Saint Patrick, nor it's not about Saint George. Those are the two grand subjects. This is not worth a thirteen.

Enter THREE SERVANTS.

First Servant. There he is—seize him!

O'Prompt. Seize me! Approach at your peril. You will—will you? (*snatching the picture, easel, etc.*). Take that at your heads, and that—and that—

First Servant. He that loves a broken head may stay—I'm off.

O'Prompt. There's a chair for you, and a stool. I'll teach you to meddle with me. (*Drives them off.*) Oh, by my soul! I've done mischief! When the dilettante comes in, he'll be in a small bit of a passion. I'll hide myself under the sofa. (*Retires.*)

Re-enter SHADOW.

Shadow. A touch of this on Rhodomont's cheek will not be amiss. Madness and murder! what demon has been here? Ruined! ruined! ruined for ever! (*throws himself on the sofa*).

Enter SIR HARRY, *with a book.*

Sir Harry. I must rehearse this scene with Shadow. What is all this confusion? Shadow!

my dear Shadow! in the name of all that's amazing, what is the matter?

Shadow. Leave me, Sir Harry! Leave me, and let one die in peace!

Sir Harry. What can this mean?

Shadow (*rising a little, and pointing to the picture*). Look there, Sir Harry! Look there, and melt with pity! Behold the fruit of my elegant labours, the darling child of my genius! The head of Rhodomont is beaten through, and Orlando is totally defaced. Oh! oh! oh!

Sir Harry. How did it happen?

Shadow. Alas! I know not. If I could find the vandal that did it, I would have him sacrificed.

Sir Harry. I think the devil is in the house. You have partners in adversity. Chromatic's Cremona is broken to atoms.

Shadow. And can you, Sir Harry, can you have the barbarity to place a paltry fiddle in competition with my Rhodomont?

Sir Harry. Metaphor was locked up all last night in a closet; he wanted to make a secret of it, but I have found him out.

Shadow. I would willingly be locked up fifty nights to restore my Orlando to his pristine beauty.

Sir Harry. I console with you most sincerely.

Shadow. Such brilliancy of colouring! Such boldness of execution! Such a noble disposition of light and shade!

Sir Harry. I pity you from my heart.

Shadow. Such expression in the countenance! Such proportion in the figures! Such beauty in the perspective!

Sir Harry. I commiserate you from my soul. But bear your misfortunes like a man. I am come to rehearse with you. I hope you are perfect in your character of Laertes.

Shadow. Don't talk to me of Laertes, Sir Harry!

Sir Harry. The performance will be suspended without you.

Shadow (*rising*). Let it. Let all the affairs of Europe be suspended. They are indifferent to me. I am a ruined man! Oh, Rhodomont! Rhodomont!

[*Exit.*

Sir Harry. This is a strange frenzy about a pitiful daub. (O'PROMPT *rises behind the sofa.*)

O'Prompt. Ha! ha! ha! (*hides himself again*).

Sir Harry. What was that? (*looks round*). Mere fancy! I am horribly vexed at his refusal to per-

form Laertes. (O'PROMPT *looks up*.) We must find a substitute.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I think I'll offer my services.

Sir Harry. Now I must rehearse by myself.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I'll rehearse with you, my jewel.

Sir Harry. Let me see—— (O'PROMPT *advances unobserved, and puts himself in a tragical attitude*.)

'What's he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane.'

O'Prompt (*seizing him by the throat*). The devil take thy soul!

Sir Harry. Who are you?

O'Prompt. Laertes, at your service. I've had the honour of acting Laertes in Mr. O'Tagrag's company.

Sir Harry. Scoundrel! this insolence shall not pass unpunished.

O'Prompt. Scoundrel!—mind what you are saying.

Sir Harry. Villain! miscreant! answer me

instantly—who are you and where do you come from?

O'Prompt. Faith, I'm an honest man, and I come from Ireland.

Sir Harry. Damn your honesty!—you——

O'Prompt. Ah! you may well damn my honesty, as you've none of your own, Mr. Dilettante Hamlet! And is this all the thanks I get for kindly undertaking a part at a minute's warning?

Sir Harry. Impertinent rascal!

O'Prompt (*aside*). Impertinent rascal! That's rather more than the honour of Ireland can digest. Sure, now, and I won't be after tweaking him by the nose. Ah! here comes old Comfit. Och! I've a scheme——(*aloud*). Do you mean to call me an impertinent rascal now?

Sir Harry. Yes, puppy!

O'Prompt (*aside*). Puppy, too! Och! I'll revenge myself neatly.

Enter COMFIT *behind.*

O'Prompt. It's mighty well, sir—it's mighty well; but take care I don't expose you to Mr. Comfit, that's all.

Comfit (*aside*). Hey! what's all this?

Sir Harry. Expose me, sirrah?

O'Prompt. How would you look in the presence of that injured husband, if I should boldly stand forward and say to him: Sir, I found this dilettante gentleman stealing soft kisses from the lips of your tender bride?

Comfit. How? (*aside*).

Sir Harry. This is a madman—he raves—(*aside*).

O'Prompt. If I were to expose the whole of that iniquitous transaction?

Comfit (*aside*). Furies!

O'Prompt. If I were to let him know the full extent of his disgrace?

Comfit (*aside*). Fiends and fire!

O'Prompt. But no, sir! I have too much regard for Mr. Comfit's feelings to inform him of a single circumstance; so I leave you to the pleasant company of your own conscience (*going*).

Comfit. Hold! I insist on knowing the transaction you allude to.

O'Prompt. Sir!—no, sir! I have so much regard for your feelings that you shall not get a syllable of it from me. Oh! this was a clever contrivance (*aside*). [*Exit*.

Comfit. Sir, there is no need of explanation—I understand the matter perfectly—I—I——

Sir Harry. Upon my honour, sir, then, that is more than I do: I was never so much at a loss in the whole course of my life.

Comfit. Sir, you may well be at a loss, when an injured husband——

Sir Harry (*aside*). Here's another lunatic! Sir, it is needless to ask if there has been a fire in Bedlam.

Comfit. Bedlam! Death and thunder! What do you mean by that? I say, sir—I—I——

Sir Harry. May I take the liberty, sir, to inquire who you are?

Comfit. Who am I, sir? Sir, I am that injured husband of whose wrongs you are the author. I am Gregory Comfit, sir, to your confusion, and I insist—that is, I demand—that is—lightning and devils! (*throwing off his disguise*).

Sir Harry. Mr. Comfit, I assure you——

Comfit. Sir, it's too plain! It's too plain! Did not I hear that honest Irishman tax you with your iniquities? And had you the impudence to deny a particle of his assertions?

Sir Harry. I perceive it is useless to argue with you now, sir: when you are cool I shall be happy

to talk with you.—This is the most extraordinary adventure. I'll never rehearse Hamlet again, if I live to eternity (*aside*). [*Exit.*

Comfit. Cool! I shall never be cool! I rage, I burn, I boil with passion! This comes of marrying a girl! Oh, damn the dilettanti! [*Exit.*

Re-enter O'PROMPT, *laughing and clapping his hands.*

O'Prompt. Bravo! bravo! To be sure, now, little Peter O'Prompt, and you have made a fine confusion. The dilettante poet locked up in a closet —the fiddler's instrument broken to pieces—the painter's canvas demolished—and the Hamlet bothered out of his senses!

Re-enter SERVANTS, *behind.*

First Servant. Slily—hush!

O'Prompt. I have done more mischief than I intended, and I am rather afraid I shall get into a dilemma.

First Servant. That you may swear for.

O'Prompt. My first care now must be to make my escape.

First Servant. We shall prevent you. (*They advance.*)

O'Prompt. Surrounded! Oh, you cunning dogs!

First Servant. Come you along with us. We'll take care of your rogueship.

O'Prompt. Paws off! Touch me, and I'll be refractory. Let me alone, and I'll walk off peaceably. Hark you here, Timothy!

First Servant. My name's John.

O'Prompt. All's one for that. Stand a little closer, and I'll let you into a secret. I'll make a discovery of my grand scheme for turning things topsy-turvy (*trips him up*). That's what we call the pantomime touch. Arrah! Stand aside! (*runs off*).

First Servant. Confound your pantomime touch! Is that your discovery? The rascal's gone!

Second Servant. Shall we pursue him again?

First Servant. No! no! I've had enough of him. Let him go. He is sure enough of being hanged without our interference. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—THE INN.

Enter TACTIC *with a letter.*

Tactic. I exist again—I tread on air—I am a new man! This letter from the only friend whom I

entrusted with my destination informs me that the penitence of one of my swindlers, excited by a dangerous illness, has restored to me nearly half of my former possessions; and that will be more than sufficient for my present plans. I'll marry my dear Emma, take a house on the seashore, and pass the rest of my days in the bosom of domestic felicity and elegant retirement. As I live, here comes Comfit without his disguise: some new adventure, I presume.

Enter COMFIT.

Comfit. Oh, Mr. Tactic! I am the most miserable old man! Everything that I feared has come to pass. Ah! I knew what I had to expect from the time Orlando Furioso came into my house!

Tactic. You alarm me. In the name of wonder, what has happened?

Comfit. I cannot speak it. Here is your servant, the witness of my dishonour.

Enter O'PROMPT.

O'Prompt. That pantomime touch was a neat thought—— Oh, Mr. Comfit! I rejoice to see you.

Comfit. Now, let me hear the fatal story. I am prepared.

O'Prompt. And so am I—to make an ample acknowledgment. Give me your hand, and promise me your forgiveness, and I'll explain the whole.

Comfit. I do.

O'Prompt. Faith, then, it was nothing more or less than a trick of mine.

Comfit. And have you the impudence——?

Tactic. Nay, you have pledged your word.

O'Prompt. Master Hamlet took the liberty to call me an impertinent rascal—I saw you coming, and devised a stratagem to bother him a little—that is all.

Comfit. And what was the man in the closet?

O'Prompt. Faith, that was another trick of mine.

Comfit. And dare you think, sir, that after getting me a broken head and taking away my wife's character——

Tactic. Remember your promise. Did not I caution you, sirrah, against these abominable tricks?

O'Prompt. Faith and troth, I always lay up your cautions in my head very carefully; but somehow or other they are always sure to slip out when a neat opportunity of making fun presents itself.

Comfit. Now, may I request a solution of last night's mystery?

Tactic. It originated in a mistake relative to your niece and daughter, which shall be explained to you at leisure. The latter has bestowed her affections elsewhere; the former, if you please, shall be my choice.

Comfit. My niece, Emma? My poor, pretty, portionless niece?

Tactic. Even so. I have more than enough for both.

O'Prompt (*aside*). I should like to know how what is not sufficient for one can be more than enough for two. I'm afraid that's a bit of a bull. (*Apart.*) You're not going to throw yourself away on a girl without a penny when you have nothing at all of your own?

Tactic. Read that, sirrah! (*gives the letter*).

O'Prompt (*having read it*). Hurrah! Sure, now, if there was a river in the way I would not jump over it.

Comfit. Give me your hand. You are a fine, generous fellow, and shall not have a portionless bride. I always intended to provide handsomely for Emma.

O'Prompt. Now you're a hearty old boy, and I ask your pardon.

Tactic. You must not refuse him. His honesty and fidelity are truly exemplary, though he sometimes suffers his love for mischief——

O'Prompt. 'To overstep the modesty of nature.' As I am a true man, I'll try to reform.

Comfit. Well, I forgive you. And now, what's to be done?

Tactic. Will you take my advice?

Comfit. Let me hear it.

Tactic. Return to your wife, shake hands with the dilettanti, and give your daughter to Metaphor.

Comfit. I believe it will be the best plan. You shall direct me.

Tactic. Forward, then. O'Prompt, you will follow us. [*Exeunt* COMFIT *and* TACTIC.

O'Prompt. Fast enough. When my master's married, to be sure I'll go to bed sober. I'm afraid I've offended the dilettanti beyond hope of forgiveness. I suppose now, as soon as I get to the house, they'll 'cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war,' as I used to say when I acted Mark Antony in Mr. O'Tagrag's company. Ah! poor Mr. O'Tagrag! I often lament the unlucky little accident that dissolved our theatrical connection.

SONG.

Oh, Mr. O'Tagrag! great tragedy king!
I am speechless with woe when your sorrows I sing;
While I think of those moments, as light as a feather,
When we acted Othello and Falstaff together.

Says Mr. O'Tagrag: 'Observe what I say:
This is quite labour lost—there's the devil to pay.
My profits are short and my bills growing long;
So I'll tell you what—we are all in the wrong.'

Says I: 'Mighty hero! despise Fortune's pow'r;
For time and the day will soon run through the hour.'
Says he: ''Tis in vain 'gainst the torrent to pull—
My purse is quite empty, my heart is quite full.'

Says I: 'Mr. O'Tagrag, I pretty well guess,
That when all is but nothing a share must be less.'
I began a fine speech, and was going on gaily,
But he march'd off the stage—in the charge of a bailey! [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—AN APARTMENT IN COMFIT'S HOUSE.

Enter CHROMATIC *and* SHADOW, *meeting.*

Chromatic. My dear Shadow! I was seeking you.

Shadow. My dear Chromatic! you are the very man I wished to see.

Chromatic. I hear you have met with a melancholy disaster.

Shadow. I understand you have suffered a serious loss.

Chromatic. I desire to condole with you.

Shadow. I long to pour my sorrows into your faithful bosom.

Chromatic. A friend in adversity is truly welcome.

Shadow. A companion in calamity is a great consolation.

Chromatic. Though our misfortunes are not equal——

Shadow. Though the loss of your Cremona is not to be compared to that of my Rhodomont——

Chromatic. How, sir! do you presume to insinuate——?

Shadow. Let me tell you, Mr. Chromatic——

Chromatic. And let me tell you, Mr. Shadow——

Shadow. There are five thousand violins in the kingdom, but my Rhodomont was unique.

Chromatic. Sir, my Cremona was unequalled but by that of Signor Arietto.

Shadow. Sir, my Rhodomont was worthy of the pencil of Guido.

Chromatic. Sir, my Cremona was worthy of the finger of Orpheus.

Shadow. Sir, since you are so presumptuous——

Chromatic. Sir, since you are so conceited——

Shadow. You shall hear my real opinion.

Chromatic. I will tell you the plain truth.

Shadow. Your Cremona was a paltry English fiddle.

Chromatic. Your Rhodomont would have disgraced Harp Alley.

Shadow. Contemptible libeller!

Chromatic. Miserable dauber!

Shadow. Vile scraper of catgut!

Chromatic. Zounds, sir! you are as mad as your own Orlando!

Shadow. 'Sdeath, sir! you are as crazy as your own violin!

Chromatic. Barbarian!

Shadow. Savage!

Chromatic. Goth!
Shadow. Hun!
Chromatic. Vandal!
Shadow. Visigoth!
Chromatic. Take my mortal defiance.
Shadow. Receive my eternal enmity!

[*Exeunt severally.*

Enter MRS. COMFIT *and* SIR HARRY.

Mrs. Comfit. Mr. Comfit in the house, Sir Harry?

Sir Harry. Yes, madam, or some spirit in his likeness; for I am almost tempted to think the house is haunted.

Mrs. Comfit. This has indeed been a day of mystery and disaster; but what you relate is scarcely credible.

Enter MISS MELPOMENE.

Miss Melpomene. My dear Sir Harry! are you perfect in your character?

Sir Harry. My charming Melpomene! it goes to my heart to tell you that I am absolutely determined never to perform Hamlet again.

Miss Melpomene. Can it be? Can you, Sir Harry, have taken such a resolution? you, who are

Hamlet himself, 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form, the observed of all observers'? You must not, shall not adhere to it.

Sir Harry. My sweet Ophelia! I am bound to obey you.

Enter METAPHOR *and* SHADOW.

Metaphor. Shadow, you shall not yield to despondency. Show yourself a man, and bear up against calamity as I do.

Shadow. I will endeavour: philosophy may do much.

Enter MISS CADENCE *and* CHROMATIC.

Miss Cadence. Here is a stray sheep, whom I have fortunately recovered from the cave of despair, to which, by his looks, I believe he was hastening.

Shadow. Do I behold you again, basilisk?

Chromatic. Dare you brave my vengeance, Hottentot?

Mrs. Comfit. How now, gentlemen!—what is the matter?

Shadow. My rage is desperate.

Chromatic. My fury is implacable.

Enter MISS COMFIT *and* EMMA.

Mrs. Comfit. Let me entreat you, gentlemen.

Miss Cadence. Let me entreat you, gentlemen.

Miss Comfit. And let me entreat you, gentlemen.

Chromatic. The powers of harmony must not plead in vain.

Shadow. The three graces may command their humble slave.

Chromatic. Mr. Shadow, I sincerely lament the destruction of your divine Rhodomont.

Shadow. Mr. Chromatic, I deeply deplore the loss of your exquisite Cremona.

Enter COMFIT, TACTIC, *and* O'PROMPT.

Omnes. Mr. Comfit returned!

Mrs. Comfit. My dear husband!

Comfit. My lamb! Ladies and gentlemen, welcome all. Sir Harry, I ask your pardon. My conduct this morning was occasioned by a misapprehension.

Sir Harry. It is forgotten, sir.

Comfit. Allow me to introduce to you my intended nephew, Mr. Tactic. Come hither, Emma; don't blush, girl! There; bless you both (*joining*

their hands). Mr. Metaphor, I believe you love my daughter.

Metaphor. I do, sir, most fervently; and I believe Miss Comfit has a little penchant for me.

O'Prompt (*aside*). A penchant! I suppose that's the dilettante word for sneaking kindness.

Comfit. Take her, then, and be happy. And now permit me to ask your forgiveness for my Irish friend here.

Metaphor. I cannot refuse you, sir.

O'Prompt. Sir, I am very sorry I did not use you like a gentleman.

Sir Harry. I shall not be appeased so readily.

Miss Melpomene. Nay, Sir Harry, at my intercession——

O'Prompt. Oh, bless your sweet tragedy face!

Sir Harry. That appeal is irresistible. And as there are so many votaries on their way to the temple of Hymen, I shall not like to be left behind. If my sweet Ophelia would accompany me thither——

Miss Melpomene. Oh, Sir Harry! You have long been the Hamlet of my thoughts.

Sir Harry. What think you, Chromatic?

Chromatic. I can think of nothing, Sir Harry, but my unfortunate Cremona.

Shadow. And I shall never cease to lament the demolition of my Rhodomont.

Sir Harry. Then you are the only discontented persons in the company. And it is a delightful circumstance when so many happy beings meet under one roof:

And yet our share of joy will be but scanty,
Unless your plaudits crown the Dilettanti.

THE END.

THE CIRCLE OF LODA

A DRAMA

IN TWO ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Cormac.

Calmar.

Ferdan.

Hidalvar.

Agnarr.

Hanri.

Egill.

Spirits, Bards, Warriors, &c.

Rindane.

Mengala.

The twelve Valkyries, or Fatal Sisters.

Scene : Sora, a country of Scandinavia.

Time : About the beginning of the fifth century.

The Circle of Loda was a rude circle of stones, used as a place of worship among the Scandinavians.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE COAST OF SORA. NIGHT. *Enter* CORMAC, CALMAR, FERDAN, BARDS *and* WARRIORS.

Chorus of Bards.

Hark! the northern blasts arise!
Night o'erhangs these stormy climes!
Dimly seen, from darken'd skies,
Bend the forms of other times.

Mighty shades of days of old,
Shades of chiefs renown'd in story,
From their clouds with joy behold
How their children rush to glory.

'Haste, haste away!' they seem to say,
'Guilt soon shall meet its destiny!
In glorious death resign your breath,
Or crown your arms with victory!'

Cormac. At length, my friends, on these devoted shores
Our long-victorious banners proudly stream,
To mark our course to vengeance. Ere the sun
Again shall sink beneath the western waves,
Shall Erin's sons, with growing shouts of joy,
Proclaim the fall of Sora's treach'rous chief.

Calmar. On yonder hill the tyrant's dwelling stands,
Where the large oak is flaming to the wind;
And there the voice of joy, the songs of bards,
Declare Hidalvar spreads the nightly feasts,
Nor thinks of coming danger.

Ferdan. Let us seize
Th' auspicious hour, and whilst, in fancied safety,
He fills the shell, and listens to the song,
Rush on at once, in all our rattling arms,
And hurl destruction on the miscreant's head.

Cormac. No, Ferdan, no: though vengeance be our aim,
Let honour be our guide. I came not here
To spring in darkness on a helpless prey.
From earliest years I shook the sounding spear,
And drew the sword amid the strife of kings;
Victory and fame still follow'd in my steps,

Till age, that universal conqueror,
Checked my full course, and bade me hang my shield
High in my ancient hall, and wait the hour
When I should join my fathers in the clouds,
And ride upon the storm. But now, once more,
My only child, my darling daughter's wrongs,
Have giv'n new sinews to my aged limbs,
And warm'd my frozen blood. Again the sword
Gleams in my hand, again I rise to war;
And shall I, in this last of all my battles,
Lead on my friends to midnight deeds of slaughter,
And tarnish all the glories of my life?

Ferdan. Forgive, my noble king, the dark suggestion,
Which now I blush to own. My ardent soul
Impatient of delay, and all on fire
To crush the fair Mengala's base oppressor,
Had made me think the honourable meed
Of open war too good for such a villain;
And thence I wish'd, in my unthinking zeal,
To punish thus his ruffian treachery.

Cormac. Ferdan, a fault repented and acknowledg'd
Dwells not remember'd in the gen'rous mind,
And hence I banish all ungrateful thoughts

Which thy dishonourable wish at first
Had given birth to.

Calmar. Soft! Methought I heard
A coming tread, but the wild wind has drown'd it.

Enter EGILL.

Ferdan. Ho! Who goes there?

Egill. From fam'd Hidalvar's halls
I come to bid ye, strangers, to the feast:
Our watchful scouts have mark'd your landing here
Beneath the shades of night, and I am sent
To ask if here as friends or foes you come,
And bring you to his dwelling.

Cormac. Know then, bard,
That Erin's king has hither led a band
Of the most valiant spirits of his isle,
To wash away, in false Hidalvar's blood,
His dearest daughter's matchless injuries.

Egill. What injuries, great king?

Cormac. What injuries!
Thou art not ignorant that, two years since,
The King of Sora sought my festive halls,
And gain'd my daughter's love, and my consent
To bear her with him to his native land.

Egill. 'Tis true, oh Cormac, but that lovely maid
Has sunk an early victim to the grave.

Cormac. Bard! bard! 'tis false!
Egill. Oh, mighty chief of Erin!
Ne'er till this hour was Egill tax'd with falsehood.
Once more, I here repeat thy child is dead,
For sad Hidalvar led me to her tomb,
And there I sung her funeral song of praise.
Cormac. Old man, thou either art deceived thyself
Or anxious to deceive. My daughter lives;—
Nay, answer not, but hasten to thy king,
And tell him, Cormac knows his villainy.
Tell him, I know he lov'd my daughter once,
But, more inconstant than autumnal winds,
Abandon'd her for one as black in soul
As she is fair in form. Till he knew her,
His heart was pure and noble. She, most vile!
She urg'd him to expose my hapless child,
In a weak boat, on these tempestuous seas,
And doubtless thinks she perish'd in the waves;
But valiant Calmar, in his dark-ribb'd ship,
Returning, crown'd with fame, from distant lands,
Discover'd and preserv'd her. Oh! what words
Can speak my rage, astonishment, and grief,
When in my arms I clasp'd my dear Mengala,
And heard her sad, sad tale? My feeble arms,
Unnerv'd by age, resum'd their former vigour,

And as again I drew my trusty sword,
Which long disuse had rusted in its scabbard,
A thousand heroes flock'd around their king
And rais'd a gen'ral cry of 'War and vengeance!'

Egill. Thy story, chief, has fill'd my anxious mind
With horror and surprise; but, as I hope
When icy death shall snatch me from the world
In Odin's hall to strike the shadowy harp,
Amid departed warriors—trust me, Cormac,
I knew not Hidalvar's guilt and baseness
To thy most beauteous daughter.

Cormac. I believe thee.

Calmar. Then haste thee back, thou venerable bard,
And tell thy king that Erin's warlike sons
Impatient here await the rising light,
To hurl the thunders of avenging war
On a proud, treach'rous coward.

Egill. Valiant chief,
How great soe'er may be his other crimes,
Hidalvar is no coward.

Calmar. Bard, I tell thee,
The wretch who flies, on heels of lightning speed,
From battle's echoing dangers, is a hero

Compar'd to him whose hollow, dastard soul
Can harm the woman who, in confident love,
Looks up to him for safety.

Egill. King of Erin,
I go to bear thy message to Hidalvar.
Farewell, brave chiefs.

Cormac. Farewell, thou good old bard.

[*Exit* EGILL.

As yet the tedious night is not half worn;
Here let us rest beneath these aged oaks,
Till morning call to battle. Bards of Erin,
Awake your harps to songs of love and war;
And Calmar, when our host shall sink in sleep,
Do thou watch o'er them with a chosen few,
To guard their slumbers from a treach'rous foe.

Duet and Chorus.

First Bard. On ancient Cromla's dark brown steeps,
Alone Fiona sits, and weeps,
When shall she joy recover?

She sighs for Ardan distant far,
She thinks upon the dang'rous war,
And trembles for her lover.

But soon, lovely maiden, thy grief shall subside
As sinks to its level the tempest-swell'd tide
Of the stream some sweet valley adorning;
When the clouds are dispers'd, and the night-vapour flies,
And the lark carols blithely her song in the skies,
'Beneath the pale light of the morning.'

Second Bard. At length with fame her love appears;
No more her eyes, suffus'd with tears,
Lament her absent treasure;
And Ardan, for his glorious pains,
A rich and sweet reward obtains,
In beauty's smiles of pleasure.

The warrior of Erin thus hastes to the strife,
Well pleas'd for his country to hazard his life,
His bosom to fear is a stranger;
His breast beats with joy as he cuts the white wave,
For the smiles of the fair are the meed of the brave,
Who scorn the approaches of danger.

Chorus: The warrior of Erin, &c.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE II.—A WOOD. *Enter* MENGALA, *disguised in armour.*

Mengala. The tribes of Erin sleep, all save a few,
A watchful few, who guard their slumb'ring friends,
And I, the wretched victim of a passion
Most true and most unhappy. Little thinks
My too fond father, whom his daughter's wrongs
Have led to case his aged limbs in steel,
That, thus disguis'd, that lost, ill-fated daughter
Accompanies his course. What brought me hither?
I scarcely dare confess it to myself,
The love I bear Hidalvar—love for him
Whose cruelty and falsehood should have kindled
The fiercest flames of hatred and revenge
In this too constant heart. I love him still:
And long I strove, with tears and with entreaties,
To banish vengeance from my father's breast,
But finding him inexorable still
To sighs and supplications, thus attir'd
I mingled with the crowd of Erin's youth,
And hither came to perish with my love.
Why was I snatch'd from death? Oh! would the bark,
The wretched bark, in which Hidalvar plac'd me,

Had been o'erwhelm'd in Gormal's stormy seas!
Then had my father never known my fate,
Nor Erin's warriors sought Hidalvar's ruin.
My doom is fix'd: the sword that strikes his heart
Will draw my life-blood too. I could die happy,
Methinks, could I but see him once again
And whisper my forgiveness. With the first
Faint beams of morn, ere yet the hostile tribes
Shall join in war, I'll wander tow'rds his dwelling.
Kind chance, perhaps, will throw him in my way;
Then, if his nature be susceptible
Of shame, remorse, or sorrow, if his bosom
Be not quite dead to pity, ere we part,
Mengala's woes shall touch Hidalvar's heart.

Song: MENGALA.

The night is long, the skies o'ercast,
And coldly blows th' autumnal blast;
Unfriended, on a dreary shore,
I rove, whilst foaming billows roar
Around in wild commotion.

But darker is my fate unbless'd,
And colder is my hopeless breast,
And stronger tumults rend my soul
Than those which thy loud waves control,
Thou ever restless ocean!

Hidalvar! dear inconstant youth!
I thought thy heart the seat of truth:
How swiftly flew the time away!
With thee I led each happy day,
Unthinking of the morrow.

What love was e'er more true than mine?
False as thou art, it still is thine;
Yet thou could'st mock my frantic cry,
And coldly cast me oft to die,
Or live in ceaseless sorrow!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—THE HALL OF HIDALVAR. HIDALVAR, RINDANE, AGNARR, HANRI, CHIEFS, *and* BARDS *discovered.*

Hidalvar. Now, Egill, say, who are these stranger chiefs
That, under favour of the shelt'ring night,
Have landed on our shores?

Egill. A princely band,
Equipp'd for war, whose bosoms burn with hatred
To thee and to thy people, who but wait
The coming morn, to scatter o'er thy land
The tenfold thunders of collected vengeance.

Hidalvar. What is the cause of their vindictive fury?
And what their names, their country, and their force?

Egill. Their force is mighty, more, I fear, than we,
Thus unprepar'd, can venture to resist,
With any hope of victory.

Hidalvar. That I fear not:
I never yielded yet to mortal man,
Nor will I, whilst my bosom throbs with life.
Their names and country?

Egill. Cormac, King of Erin,
Rous'd, as he says, by strongest provocation,
Leads on the choicest warriors of his isle
Against your life and state.

Hidalvar. Ha! is it so?
Then doubtless he has learn'd. Enough, old bard;
It matters not what cause has brought him hither,
Let it suffice us that we know our danger,
And must prepare to meet it.

Rindane. Let it come.
'Twill yet be long ere ruddy morning break;
Meanwhile, let ev'ry chief of Sora's land
Arouse his slumb'ring tribes, and doubt we not

But warlike souls enough shall flock around us
To lash invasion howling from our shores.

Hidalvar. Haste, haste, my chiefs! and Egill, hie thee hence,
And strike the shield which hangs without the gates;
It never rings in peace: my friends shall hear,
And hasten to its summons—fly—dispatch.

[*Exeunt all but* HIDALVAR *and* RINDANE.

Rindane. See what thy childish clemency has gain'd us,
If clemency it were: I had not pow'r,
To sway thy mind to touch Mengala's life.
Had she been slain at once, as I advis'd,
The story of her fate had still been lock'd
From mortal knowledge; but to screen, forsooth,
Thy spotless soul from absolute guilt of blood,
Thou, in despite of my remonstrances,
Must send her forth to sea, and trust to chance
To save or to destroy her. Mark the consequence.

Hidalvar. When angry war is threat'ning at our gates,
Why waste the precious time in vain reproaches?
Occasion calls for action, not for words.

Rindane. For action, true; but how are we prepar'd?

A few raw, drowsy troops, in haste collected,
Oppos'd to all the pride and flow'r of Erin!

Hidalvar. 'Tis true, 'tis true; yet what alternative?
For well I know that Cormac's ardent soul,
When once enkindled to revenge, would spurn
All terms of peace.

Rindane. Peace! I despise the thought!
Mark me, Hidalvar; thou hast often heard
My father's fame.

Hidalvar. I have: he fell in battle,
With glory crown'd, ere yet thy infant tongue
Had learn'd to lisp his name; yet still he lives
Recorded in the song; the aged bard
Feels second youth whene'er he sings his deeds,
The blushing virgin to her list'ning lover
Relates the wondrous tale, and bids him follow
The steps of Herromar.

Rindane. 'Tis also sung
That victory follow'd wheresoe'er he led,
That trembling nations fled before his sword,
Like mist before the sun.

Hidalvar. So runs the tale:
But, dear Rindane, this is not the time
To listen to the deeds of former days,

The present danger ev'ry thought demands,
And calls for prompt exertion.

Rindane. Chief of Sora,
Not through an idle motive have I brought
My father to thy mind. Dreadful in war
Was Herromar; his never shaken soul,
Firm as his native rocks, beheld, unmov'd,
The fiercest forms of horror and of death;
Yet little had avail'd his matchless valour,
His giant strength, and stern contempt of perils,
But that he bore, the gift of mighty Thor,
A sword of magic pow'r.

Hidalvar. Of magic pow'r!

Rindane. The all-knowing dwarfs, who dread the light of day,
And hold their dwelling deep in central caverns,
In seven successive midnights form'd the blade,
And from the vapours, gather'd and condens'd,
Of earth, and air, and ocean, rais'd the flame
With which they temper'd it. The polish'd steel
Flash'd the meridian brightness of the sun;
Its slightest touch was death.

Hidalvar. And when he died,
To whom devolv'd this dreadful, glorious gift?

Rindane. Near Loda's Circle dwelt an aged man,

With whom my father lov'd to sit, and talk
Of things beyond the reach of vulgar minds.
On that sad day which gave him to the tomb,
My father bare me to the old man's cave
And thus address'd him: 'Venerable seer!
I bring thee my dear child, my lov'd Rindane;
If I should fall in battle, and my soul
Forebodes I shall, be thou a father to her;
Her mother sleeps in death, and thou alone
Can'st rear and succour her. At ev'ning close,
If I return not, haste thee to the field,
Seek out my cave, and lay me in the earth,
And with me—mark this last, most solemn charge—
If it perchance escape the plund'ring foe,
Inter this magic sword, for though my arm
It still has crown'd with conquest, to my race
'Tis pregnant with destruction.' Then he kiss'd me,
And left the cave, to which he ne'er return'd.
The good old man perform'd his last injunctions;
He found his mangled corse, and now my sire,
And his all-conqu'ring sword, together lie,
Near Loda's mystic circle.

Hidalvar. What of this?

Rindane. The old man lov'd me with a parent's fondness:

Most deeply was he skill'd in mystic lore,
And many a magic spell to me he taught
Of mightiest pow'r: amongst the rest, I learn'd
The thrilling verse which bursts the tomb and wakes
The slumb'ring dust, which calls the shudd'ring spirit
Back to its earthly mansion, and compels
The dead to yield their hidden treasures up.
Now learn my purpose: to my father's tomb,
Whilst midnight darkness overhangs the world,
Will I now bend my steps, and there, by spells,
Enforce his shiv'ring and reluctant ghost
To yield the magic sword, the precious gift
Which shall ensure us victory.

Hidalvar. Rindane!
Remember what thy dying sire declar'd,
That to his race 'tis pregnant with destruction.
Forego thy rash ill-omen'd enterprise.

Rindane. Hidalvar! my resolves are fix'd: in vain
Would'st thou attempt to change them. True, I bear
A female form, but not a female soul,
For I can look without dismay on scenes

Which thou would'st shrink from. When the morning breaks,
Meet me in Arvor's vale; till then, farewell.

Hidalvar. Yet hold, Rindane; 'tis an act forbidden
By Odin and by Hela, and their wrath——

Rindane. Fear not for me: farewell!

[*Exit.*

Hidalvar. Is this Rindane?
Is this the gentle maid who gain'd my heart
In old Nerimnher's cave? For whose dear sake
I plung'd into a sea of guilt and horror?
Oh! artful serpent! how she wound about
My then unspotted soul! and even yet,
Although I know and shudder at her crimes,
I cannot cease to love her. Oh, Mengala!
Perhaps she yet exists—delusive hope!
I must not think of that; 'tis madness—death!
Love, grief, remorse, a thousand warring passions
Distract and torture me: 'twere best repair
To Runi's cave, where oft by night assemble
The awful spirits of departed heroes:
To them will I address my suppliant voice,
And they, perhaps, will answer to my call,
And point my path aright. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—A LANDSCAPE. MOONLIGHT. *Enter* AGNARR *and* HANRI, *from opposite sides, with* BARDS *and* WARRIORS.

Hanri. Well met, Agnarr! and you, my valiant friends,
Whom ever ready at your country's call,
The welcome, though unlook'd for, voice of war
Has rous'd to instant action.

Agnarr. Full success,
Doubt not, shall crown our arms, and Erin's maids
And grey-hair'd matrons shall, in tears of blood,
Lament their lovers and their sons who soon
Shall moulder on our plains, and yield a banquet
To hawks and ravens.

Hanri. Strike the harp, and swell
The bold and animating song of battle;
Then let us to the king.

Grand Chorus.

O'er Loduna's ample plain
Silence holds her midnight reign;
But when morning fires the skies,
Hostile bands in arms shall rise,

Then no more shall silence reign
O'er Loduna's ample plain.
Swords shall clash and shields resound,
Bursting blood shall stream around,
Bows shall twang and helmets glare,
Nimble arrows hiss in air,
Death and glory, hand in hand,
There shall take their awful stand.
Soon as morning fires the sky,
Haste to conquer or to die! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—A CAVERN. *Enter* HIDALVAR.—*After a pause, he speaks:*

Warriors bold of days long past,
Rulers of the eddying blast,
Heroes gen'rous, bold, and strong,
Matchless chiefs renown'd in song,
Ministers of mighty Thor,
Dreadful arbiters of war,
Dwellers high of Odin's hall,
Hear your humble suppliant's call.

Ye, who, o'er the embattled plain,
Rule the war and mark the slain,

Ye, whose cloud-encircled forms
Raise the northern seas in storms,
Ye who great in wrath unfurl'd
Pour destruction on the world,
Ye, whose frowns the brave appal,
Hear your humble suppliant's call.

Solemn silence reigns around:
Lo! I press the sacred ground:
Mark me, humbly kneeling here;
Spirits of my sires, appear!
Chiefs immers'd in midnight shades,
Favour'd of the fatal maids,
Tell (my suppliant call attend)
How the coming strife shall end.

Voice from the back scene:

Tremble at the coming strife!
Danger threats thy guilty life:
Yet repent, and all is well;
More the fates forbid to tell.

Thunder. The back-scene opens, and discovers several figures in armour, half concealed with clouds. HIDALVAR *continues kneeling. Solemn music.*

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE VALLEY OF ARVOR. DAWN.

Enter HIDALVAR.

Hidalvar. Repent and all is well! The awful words
Still vibrate on my ear. Repent!—but how?
Cast off Rindane, and submit to Cormac:
The world, the vain, unjust, mistaken world,
Would say that fear, and not returning virtue,
Had been my instigator. How to act?
Submit to Cormac! Love and pride forbid it!
Well, then, to war—to lift my guilty arm
Against the virtuous, innocent life of him
Whom I already have so deeply wrong'd!
Distraction! torture! whither shall I turn?
The morning dawns, and this is Arvor's vale:
'Twas here Rindane bade me wait her coming.
Rindane! dear, seducing, lovely criminal!
If to repent be to abandon thee,
I cannot—dare not. Is it possible
That I should love and yet despise the object?

I lov'd Mengala once, and then esteem
Went hand in hand with love. How my brain burns!
Tormenting thoughts! The iron din of war
Shall drive ye hence.—Rindane comes not yet.

Enter MENGALA.

Mengala. 'Tis he: my trembling limbs can scarce sustain me.

Hidalvar. Ha! Who art thou?

Mengala. A wretch without a name,
A country, or a friend.

Hidalvar. What brings thee here?

Mengala. I seek the King of Sora.

Hidalvar. What's thy errand?
Thou see'st him here: what wouldst thou with me? speak.

Mengala. I wish to serve thee, chief: I seek from thee
Protection and support.

Hidalvar. Thy arms bespeak thee
Of Erin's nation: Cormac is my foe,
Yet mark me, boy; thou sue'st to me in vain,
If thou be basely seeking to desert
Thy king and country at the hour of need.

Mengala. Mistake me not, I am not such a wretch.
Believe me, Erin is not more my country
Than Sora is. Misfortune's hand has press'd
Most roughly on my heart, and stern necessity
Has made me wear these cold and heavy arms
Which suit not with my habit nor my youth.

Hidalvar. How would'st thou serve me, then? the race of Sora
Is nurs'd in battles and inur'd to hardships.
If thou would'st dwell in indolence and peace,
'Tis not in Sora thou must seek for them.

Mengala. Weak, and unus'd to war, I cannot wield
The heavy sword, nor hurl the whizzing dart;
Yet I would serve thee well, and might, perchance,
Beguile thy lonely hours, for I am skill'd
To strike the harp to tones of joy or sorrow—
I had a sister once—but she is gone:
She gave her heart to one who smil'd and promis'd,
And he abandoned her; 'twas said he kill'd her,
But I believe it not: no human heart
Could surely be so hard, so very hard
To kill a maid so gentle and so fond.

Hidalvar. How ev'ry word he utters rends my soul!

Mengala. I made a little ballad on her fate,
Which oft I sing to feed my melancholy:
Will't please thee to hear it?
Hidalvar. 'Tis not now the time:
I must to battle, boy.
Mengala. Nay, I entreat you:
It is but short, and will relieve my heart,
Which now is almost breaking.
Hidalvar. Well, sing on.

Song. MENGALA.

Fidallan was a comely youth,
The love of many a fair,
His breast appear'd the seat of truth,
But 'twas no inmate there.

Young Morna's virgin heart he gain'd,
And promis'd ne'er to roam,
Her aged sire's consent obtain'd,
And led her to his home.

But he, by each new beauty fir'd,
More false than summer skies,
Soon felt a stronger flame inspir'd
By fierce Dengala's eyes.

With Morna's death his soul was dark,
He watch'd the rising breeze;
Alone he plac'd her in a bark,
On Gormal's boist'rous seas.

A friendly chief preserv'd her life,
And rais'd a warlike band,
Who pour'd the flames of vengeful strife
On false Fidallan's land.

A stranger met Fidallan's eyes,
Who deem'd the fair one dead;
He knew not Morna in disguise,
She told her tale and fled.

[*Exit.*

Hidalvar. It is Mengala! stay, thou injur'd innocence!
Oh, stay! She's gone; she leaves me to despair:
Now shall I follow and implore her pardon?
A load of guilt and shame retards my steps.
And then to leave my lovely, dear Rindane;—
Dear! is she dear to me? Too well, I feel,
She is: yet hers are not the tender heart,
And spotless soul, with which Mengala charms.

Why do I love her? why—that she is beauteous;
True, she is beauteous, but the pois'nous berry,
Which shows most fair and tempting to the eye,
Contains a deadlier juice than the rank weed,
Whose honest form proclaims its noxious nature,
And lures not to destruction. Let me fly
Her fatal charms, and at Mengala's feet—
It shall be so; but where will she be found?
And, if I find her, can I hope forgiveness?
Said not the spirit of the cave, 'Repent
And all is well'? That thought shall urge me on.

Enter RINDANE.

Rindane. Hidalvar, hold! why whither wert thou going?
What means this agitation? No reply?
Thine eyes roll wildly, and thy cheeks are flush'd,
As if each rival passion in thy bosom
Were struggling for the mast'ry. Dear Hidalvar!
What makes thee thus?

Hidalvar. Hence, false enchantress, hence!
Whom Lok, the subtle enemy of man,
Sent hither for my ruin.

Rindane. This to me!

Hidalvar. Away! away! I know thee now, Rindane!
I will no longer be that easy fool
Thou long hast found me. Thy pernicious arts,
Which plung'd my soul in vice and wreck'd my peace,
Have lost their pow'r. I leave thee to thy fate.
Rindane. What can have caus'd this sudden gust of passion?
Why these ungen'rous, cruel, false reproaches?
Have I not lov'd thee with unvarying truth?
Since first we met in old Nerimnher's cave,
Can'st thou recall one word or deed of mine
That gave not proof of my misplac'd affection?
Hidalvar. Misplac'd, Rindane!
Rindane. Ay, if thou desert me.
Wilt thou, Hidalvar, can'st thou cast me off?
Hidalvar. I must not stay, or I am lost again: (*aside.*)
Be firm, be firm, my soul!—Once more, adieu!
Rindane. And whither wilt thou go?
Hidalvar. To Erin's king,
To make atonement for my crimes to him,
And my belov'd Mengala: answer not,
'Tis past thy art, consummate as it is,

To shake my virtuous resolution.
Rindane. Oh! 'tis a master stroke of policy!
Yet think not I can be the shallow dupe
Of this most worthy artifice.
Hidalvar. Rindane!
Rindane. I had been weak enough to mourn thy loss,
Had I not known the cause, but as it is,
I pity and despise thee. So farewell.
Hidalvar. I understand thee not.
Rindane. Yet I am wrong
To blame thee thus, for thou art young and powerful,
And youth and pow'r undoubtedly have charms
To bind thee to the world, and it were pity,
Whilst these are thine, to risk thy precious life
In the uncertain field of dang'rous war:
Go, cringe to Cormac, kneel, and sue for peace,
Disgrace thyself, thy country, and thy name,
And, by the loss of honour and respect,
Preserve thy wretched life, then live despis'd,
And die forgotten. Go, illustrious chief!
Hidalvar. Distraction!
Rindane. Wherefore do you hesitate?
Go, ere it be too late. Down yonder hill,

Agnarr and Hanri lead their warlike bands;
Oh! they will triumph in their noble king!
They will rejoice and glory in a peace,
So honourably gain'd!

Hidalvar. No more! no more!

Rindane. Yet, dear Hidalvar, do not forfeit thus
Thy friends' esteem and my too constant love;
Cast off this childish folly that has seiz'd thee,
Call back thy native energy of mind,
And thou and thy Rindane, side by side,
Will die or conquer.

Hidalvar. Oh! thou lovely mischief!
Lead where thou wilt, and I will follow thee.

Rindane. Why, this is well: thy harshness wrung my heart;
But thou art kind again, and 'tis forgotten.

Enter HANRI.

Hanri. My king, the tribes of Erin are preparing
To give us battle. I have sought you long.

Hidalvar. Where is Agnarr?

Hanri. Not far from hence: this signal
Will draw him hither (*striking his shield.*)

Rindane. See, our friends approach.

Enter AGNARR, Bards *and* Warriors.

Agnarr. The foe advances to Loduna's plain.
Hidalvar. Haste then to meet them.
Rindane. Valiant chiefs of Sora,
Will you permit a woman to partake
The toils and dangers of this glorious day?
Agnarr. Oh, matchless fair-one! thy illustrious presence
Will cast a double lustre on our arms.
Hidalvar. Come, to the field!
Rindane. To victory or death!—

Grand Chorus.

The bright star of day rises red from the wave,
And calls us to war, to the strife of the brave;
As the eagle of heaven descends on his prey,
We rush on our foes when renown points the way.

When the thunders of battle resound on the plain,
And the hawk hovers round, and exults o'er the slain,
In brightness tremendous our fame shall arise,
As the death-darting meteor that shoots through the skies.

Our swords are unsheath'd, and our standards
unfurl'd,
On our foes shall the lightnings of ruin be hurl'd,
'Tis the summons of glory : we haste to the call,
For our king and our country to vanquish or fall!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

Enter several parties engaged. Then enter CALMAR.

Calmar. The storm is up : the battle burns
around :
And like a torrent that has burst its banks,
The sons of Erin thunder o'er the plain,
And desolation triumphs in their course.

Enter FERDAN.

Ferdan. Our gallant countrymen, whose souls are
fire,
Whose arms, long tried in war, have never fail'd
To force the smiles of victory, seem to-day
Inspir'd with double ardour.

Calmar. Well they know
No common cause has call'd us to the field,
Our king is wrong'd, most deeply, basely wrong'd,

And to his people looks for retribution.

Ferdan. And amply shall he find it.

Calmar. See, my friend,
Superior numbers press upon the king.

Ferdan. Come, let us fly to save him.

[*Exit.*

Hanri. Turn thee, chief!
Submit or die.

Calmar. Thou vain, presumptuous boaster!
I only yield in death: the sword of Calmar
Shall end at once thy vauntings and thy life.

[*Exeunt fighting.*

Loud Alarums.

Enter HIDALVAR.

Hidalvar. Rindane moves, like Hilda, through the field,
And tracks her path with blood. Not so with me;
Remorse and shame have quite unnerv'd my arm.
Should Cormac meet me, scarcely could my sword
Defend its master—Death is now at work.
Well, let him rage: war's overwhelming storm
Should suit the tempest of contending passions,
Which rends my tortur'd breast.

Enter CORMAC.

Cormac. By all my hopes,
'Tis he, whom I so long have sought in vain.

Hidalvar. Ha! Cormac!

Cormac. King of Sora! two long years
Have past since last we met: I thought thee then
Possess'd of ev'ry virtue, and as such,
I gave thee my Mengala: in what way
Hast thou requited me? Perfidious traitor!
Now meet thy punishment. Come on, I say!

Hidalvar. Too much already have I wrong'd thee, Cormac:
I will not fight with thee.

Cormac. Base, trembling boy!
Thou art as much a coward as a villain!

Hidalvar. Enough: I would not wish to take thy life,
But I will guard my own against the world.

They fight. MENGALA *enters behind.* CORMAC *disarms* HIDALVAR. MENGALA *rushes forward; her helmet falls off, and she sinks on her knees between them.*

The scene closes.

SCENE III.—ANOTHER PART OF THE FIELD.

Several of CORMAC'S *army run over the stage.*

Enter RINDANE *and* Warriors.

Rindane. They fly! they fly! the race of Erin yield!
Come on, my friends, pursue their scatter'd host,
And nobly end a strife so well begun.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter FERDAN.

Ferdan. Confusion and disgrace! our ranks are broken!
A woman's deeds have panic-struck their souls,
And blasted all our hopes.

Enter CALMAR.

Calmar. The day is lost.
No sooner had those trembling villains fled
Than all the rest, enfeebled and confounded,
Became an easy prey.
Ferdan. What means that horn?
Calmar. 'Tis Cormac's signal to recall his friends.

How deeply must he feel the shameful flight
Of those who vow'd to perish ere to yield!

Ferdan. Their flight shall boot them little: on their rear
The fierce Rindane, like a whirlwind, following,
Spreads terror and destruction.

Calmar. May her sword
Consume them, like a pestilential fire!
If they escape, may infamy and shame
Pursue them through the earth! may ev'ry pang
The world's contempt, or fell disease can give,
Attend them to the grave! may ev'ry punishment
Th' avenging spirits of the clouds can shower,
Light on the traitors who forsake their king.

Ferdan. And such a king, so gen'rous, brave, and good,
Who sits enthron'd within his people's hearts,
And lives but for his people's happiness.

Calmar. The cause for which we arm'd might surely warm
A coward's blood, the king for whom we fight
Demands the utmost that our love can give.

Ferdan. Where'er Rindane mov'd, despair and death
Sate frowning on her helm: beneath her arm,

Thick as autumnal leaves, our warriors fell;
So fierce a spirit in a female breast
I never met before.

Calmar. Perdition seize her!

Ferdan. The horn again.

Calmar. Then haste we to the king;
And let us not, by murmuring at the fate
Of this disastrous day, increase his grief.
The chance of war, uncertain as the skies,
May bid the valiant fall, the guilty rise,
But all the efforts of the world combin'd
Can never shake th' unconquerable mind.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—THE CIRCLE OF LODA.

Enter RINDANE.

Rindane. Ha! whither am I led? to Loda's Circle,
The sacred spot near which my father sleeps:
'Twas here, last night, I trac'd the Runic rhyme,
And mutter'd spells of all-commanding power,
To gain this magic weapon, though his ghost

Denounc'd destruction on me.—Ha! what means
This sudden start of pain? Curse on my hand,
That could not wield aright this dang'rous blade,
Its point has pierc'd my arm. Oh, torture! torture!
A burning poison shoots along my veins!
And have I broken all the laws of nature,
And dar'd the pow'r of Hela, to obtain
My own death's instrument? Away! away!
Thou fatal sword!—

She throws the sword into the circle of Loda. A volume of flame bursts up. The stage is suddenly darkened. Thunder and lightning. The rocks in the back-scene open and discover the VALKYRIES, *or fatal sisters, surrounded with clouds, weaving the web of destiny.* RINDANE *falls on the earth.*

Song of the Valkyries.

Clashing swords no more resound;
War withdraws his crimson train;
Death no longer stalks around,
O'er the blood-empurpled plain.

She, who, with detested spell,
Wrapp'd in midnight's fearful gloom,
Scorn'd the laws and pow'r of hell,
Broke the slumbers of the tomb;

She, whose bold and cruel hand
Heroes' blood has basely spilt,
She no more shall curse the land—
Lo! we stamp the fate of guilt!

She, who late made thousands fly,
Soon a lifeless corse shall be:
E'en in triumph she shall die,
In the hour of victory!
(*The back-scene closes.*)

Enter AGNARR.

Agnarr. The storm of war, in which the brave delight,
Has ceas'd, and joy attends on victory,
Like the calm ev'ning of a troubled day,
When the sun smiles between the parting clouds.
Rindane here! extended on the earth!
Her eyes are clos'd, but life has not departed.
Rindane! still the same! what may this mean?

Awake! awake!

Rindane. I hear thy summons, Hela!
And I obey it. The tremendous portals,
That guard thy worlds of everlasting fire,
Grate on their hinges to receive thy guest!

Agnarr. Rindane!

Rindane. Ha! who calls? I know thee not.

Agnarr. Not know me! 'tis Agnarr, thy friend, Rindane!

Rindane. Agnarr! what brings thee hither? Do I live?
At Loda's Circle still!—How goes the day?
Oh triumph! triumph! Erin is defeated!
To me, to me, you owe your victory,
And dearly have I gain'd it!—'Tis no matter:—
Where is Hidalvar?

Agnarr. He will soon be here;
He bends this way—and with him—

Rindane. With him! who?
Say who is with him?

Agnarr. Cormac and Mengala.

Rindane. Hence! hence! 'tis false! 'tis false! I'll not believe thee.

Agnarr. 'Tis true, by Odin! he has made his peace

With them and Erin.

Rindane. Villain! villain! villain!
Then I have sacrificed my life for one
Who leaves me, in my dying hour, to join
In peace and friendship with my enemies!
Agnarr! thou know'st how well I lov'd Hidalvar,
But this last deed of his has chang'd that love
To bitt'rest detestation. Hear me, Odin!
In high Valhalla register my curse!
Hear me, thus prostrate at thy sacred altar,
Call down thy vengeance on the false Hidalvar!
May she, for whom he now abandons me,
Prove faithless as himself! may those whom now
He calls his friends, conspire against his state,
And drive him naked from his native land,
A famish'd wanderer! May all his days
Be pass'd in want, despair, and infamy!
And may he die unpitied and neglected,
Without one friend to close his eyes, or sooth
His parting ghost! May those who find his corse
Refuse him sepulture! And on the spot,
Where his most loath'd and putrefying carcase
Infects the passing gale, may desolation
Reign, undisturb'd, sole monarch of the scene!
May no fair flow'r, or shrub, or tempting fruit

Spring from the tainted earth, but clust'ring poisons,
And deadly weeds, fit emblems of himself!

Agnarr. Her dreadful imprecations awe my soul,
And freeze my utterance.

Rindane. How my blood boils!
The fiery poison rages at my heart,
The mists of death already dim my eyes.
Hark! Hela calls! I hear the dreadful voice;
I come! I come! oh, torture! mercy! mercy!
[*Dies.*

Agnarr. That was the groan of death; she breathes no more:
A mind like hers, had virtue been her guide,
Had been the joy and wonder of mankind;
But who will now regret her dreadful fate,
Or shed one tear of pity on her tomb?

Enter CORMAC, HIDALVAR, MENGALA, CALMAR, FERDAN, Bards, *and* Warriors *of both parties.*

Hidalvar. Again then, king of Erin, we are friends,
And never more may discord cut the knot
Which now unites us.

Calmar. Little did I think,
When Sora's warriors triumph'd in the field,

The then disastrous day would close in peace.

Hidalvar. Had Erin conquer'd, this had never been,
For I had then disdain'd to make submissions
Which fear and falsehood might be thought to prompt.

Mengala. For once, my dearest father, I rejoice
In thy defeat, since I have thus regain'd
Hidalvar's love—yet still I fear Rindane.

Agnarr. That fear is groundless; she has lost alike
The will and pow'r to harm. That haughty spirit,
Which scorn'd the feeble limits of mortality,
Has burst its earthly bonds, and flown for ever.

Hidalvar. Farewell, Rindane! Pardon, my Mengala,
This last sad tribute to her memory.
I must be something more or less than man
To hear unmov'd the wretched end of one
Whom once I lov'd so well. Bear her away,
And give her honourable burial.

Cormac. My soul, Hidalvar, when contrition pleads,
No longer cherishes revenge or enmity:
Nor can I mourn my unsuccessful arms,

Since thus assur'd of thy returning virtue.

Hidalvar. Then here, at Odin's altar, I renew
My vows of everlasting truth and love,
To thy unequall'd daughter.

Mengala. Oh, Hidalvar!
Most amply does my present bliss repay me
For all my suff'rings past.

Hidalvar. Come then, Mengala,
And live for ever in Hidalvar's heart.
And no dark clouds may envious fortune raise
To blast the sunshine of our future days,
Whilst my fond care shall all thy griefs remove,
And lead thee back to happiness and love.

Finale.

Strike the harp's responsive strings!
Let the song of pleasure rise!
Peace again unites our kings,
Love returns and discord flies.

Ne'er may fate, with hostile power,
Our propitious bonds destroy,
Ne'er may sorrow's tempests lower
On our promis'd scenes of joy!

THE END.

THE THREE DOCTORS

A MUSICAL FARCE

IN TWO ACTS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HIPPY.

NARCOTIC.

WINDGALL.

BARBET.

MILESTONE.

O'FIR.

SHENKIN.

CAROLINE.

LUCY.

Servants, &c.

ACT I.

Scene I.—A spacious Apartment: the Furniture in great Confusion: Servants putting it to rights.

Chorus.

Work harder and faster;
Be rubbing and scrubbing;
For fear our new master
Should give us a drubbing.

Shenkin. But when we've done working,
Old ale we shall stow in.
Second Servant. Good news for the jerkin
Of Owen Ap. Owen.

Chorus.

Work harder and faster;
Be rubbing and scrubbing;
For fear our new master
Should give us a drubbing.

Shenkin. Pless me! pless me! here's pustle and uproar! I'll ask Squire Hippy for half an hour's holiday, that I may just sit under a tree, and think whether I'm tead or alive; for I'm pothered out of my senses and intellects.

Second Servant. A creat change, Master Shenkin, since the teath of Sir Peter.

Shenkin. Our new master, look you, turns the house out of window; and here's all sorts of toctors coming town from London. There's a man-toctor, and a horse-toctor, and a tog-toctor—and——

Enter HIPPY.

Hippy. Shenkin — Shenkin — will this confounded house never be put in order?

Shenkin. Inteed, your honour, look you, I hope in two or three tays we'll pring it apout.

Hippy. Two or three centuries. That old sot, Sir Peter Paxarett, thought of nothing but liquor and pipes; and here's everything in such infernal confusion. Why don't those rascals make more haste?

Shenkin. Make more haste—you fillains—you lazy ruffians—you sots—you——

Hippy. Oh, that twinge! And I have not a

sofa fit to lie down on. Ah! I shall die before Dr. Narcotic comes. Shenkin—I think a ride would do me good.

Shenkin. A creat teal of coot, I tare pe sworn, your honour. Cot send him out for half an hour! [*Aside.*

Hippy. But there is not a horse fit to ride, though there are ten in the stable. That old booby, Sir Peter, left them to his drunken knave of a groom, and now they are all, to a beast, in the last stage of the glanders. They'll not live till Mr. Windgall comes. And the kennel, too—every dog mangy—such management! And the park—a mere wilderness—a nursery of briars—a plantation of nettles—without any live stock but goats, that have eaten up all the bark of the trees. There won't be a tree alive when Mr. Milestone comes.

Shenkin. Please, your honour, how many peoples is coming to cure the house, and the stable, and the togs, and the cardens?

Hippy. What's that to you—you—sirrah! Dr. Narcotic is coming to cure me, and Dr. Windgall is coming to cure the horses, and Dr. Barbet is coming to cure the dogs; and the great Marmaduke Milestone, Esq., is coming to trim my grounds, and marry

my daughter; and I've ordered an upholsterer, and an architect, and——

Shenkin. Pless me! pless me!

Hippy. Why don't those fellows finish their work here, and put the dining-room in order? Get about your business, you lazy—idle—loitering—creeping—dreaming—dawdling—lingering—[*Drives them off*]. And you too, you two-legged goat—you walking cheese—you animated onion—you ale-barrel—you tobacco-pipe. [*Drives off* SHENKIN.

Song. HIPPY.

Couldn't that old sot, Sir Peter,
Keep his house a little neater?
Not a sofa to recline on;
Not a table fit to dine on;
Dogs and horses all past healing;
Every servant drunk and reeling.
Flames of scorching anger burn me.
I'm so hurried,
Vexed and flurried,
Teased and worried,
Zounds! I know not where to turn me!

Piled in heaps the pans and kettles;
All the garden full of nettles;
In the arbours sheep are housing;
In the greenhouse goats are browsing.
Forced to scramble, when I ramble,
Through a copse of furze and bramble,
I'm with endless plagues surrounded.
Rage—vexation—
Tribulation
Botheration,
And confusion thrice confounded.

[*Exit.*

Enter CAROLINE *and* LUCY.

Caroline. Well, Lucy, how do you like the mountains of Wales?

Lucy. Indeed, Miss Caroline, there is so much confusion and bustle in this house that I could almost fancy myself in Kensington again. I am afraid the death of Sir Peter has not done much good to Mr. Hippy—for he seems more fidgety and discontented than ever.

Caroline. You know, Lucy, my father has been long an invalid, and thinks himself but half alive without a physician.

Lucy. And I am afraid, ma'am, now he's come to this great fortune, he means to discard your poor lover, Mr. O'Fir. He'll certainly die if you prove false-hearted.

Caroline. No, Lucy. He was faithful to me when in an obscure and humble station, and I should despise myself if I could forget him, now that the unexpected death of a distant relation has raised my father to affluence.

Duet.

Caroline. To him, my dear, my wandering youth,
Who first received my plighted truth,
I'll ever constant prove.
Life's rugged path has not a charm,
The stings of fortune to disarm,
Like constancy in love.

Lucy. The varying scenes through which we stray
With magic wiles in vain essay
The constant mind to move;
The faithless train, that rove and range,
Will find no charm in endless change,
Like constancy in love.

Both. The breast of truth no fears confound,
Though darkness close our hopes around,
And tempests scowl above;
The ills, at which the crowd repine,
Can never reach the sacred shrine
Of constancy in love.

Lucy. Indeed, ma'am, Mr. O'Fir was a good, kind-hearted gentleman, though he was always running about the country; but that's not to be wondered at, because, they say, the Irishmen are always caught wild.

Caroline. Bless your simplicity, girl. Mr. O'Fir was a picturesque tourist.

Enter HIPPY.

Hippy. What's that about a picturesque tourist? I'll be sworn you're talking of that fellow O'Fir, that used to pass all the summer in posting over the country, and the winter in making love to you, and scribbling quarto volumes of tours. It was all very well when we lived at Kensington, but it won't do now. I intend to adorn my family by having the great Marmaduke Milestone, Esq., for a son-in-law.

Caroline. Dear sir! how can I possibly like a man I have never seen?

Hippy. And how can you possibly dislike a man you have never seen?

Caroline. When we lived at Kensington, I promised in your presence to marry Mr. O'Fir; and I am too dutiful, and too fond of truth, to think of breaking my word.

Hippy. You are a disobedient minx, and I say again you shall marry Mr. Milestone. Eh! what the devil do you want?

Enter SHENKIN.

Shenkin. Sir, there's a shentleman in the hall [*presenting a card*].

Hippy. Nicholas Narcotic, M.D. Shew the shentleman in—and bring sandwiches and Madeira.

[*Exit* SHENKIN.

Enter NARCOTIC.

Hippy. Dr. Narcotic—your most obedient. My daughter, Miss Caroline Hippy.

Narcotic. Sir—mem—proud of the honour—came post—own chariot—four hacks—two hundred

and twenty-nine miles in thirty-three hours fifteen minutes.

Caroline. Were you ever in Wales before, Dr. Narcotic?

Narcotic. Never, mem. Bad country for a physician. Climate remarkably salubrious; people remarkably poor.

Caroline. For botanical pursuits, I should think, sir——

Narcotic. Botany, mem—true. Samples here in abundance. Botanise yourself, perhaps. Extremely happy, mem, to assist your pursuits. Fine science, mem; the flowery vestibule of the laboratory of nature.

Hippy. Dr. Narcotic.

Narcotic. Sir——

Hippy. Did you come here post to cure my complaints or to talk nonsense to my daughter?

Narcotic. Nonsense, sir! Brimstone and nitre!

Caroline. Excuse my father, sir, it is his way.

Narcotic. His way—mem—forgive any gentleman his way. Nothing more—mem—than a morbid affection of the manners, arising from bad education, and quarrelsome company.

Hippy. Death and fury, sir——

Narcotic. Noli me tangere! A mere tremor cordis—mem—an irritability of the præcordia. Cool him—mem—in a few hours. Copious bleedings—saline draughts—vitriolic acid—tartarised antimony —mucilaginous diluents—and the antiphlogistic regimen.

Hippy. [*Aside.*] Now, if I were not half dying, and in want of him to set me up, damme but I'd knock him down.

Enter SHENKIN *and* WINDGALL.

Shenkin. Another shentleman, sir—Mr. Windcall. [SHENKIN *sets wine, &c., on the table, and exit.*]

Windgall. Sir—I have the honour to present to your notice Gregory Windgall, doctor of horse.

Narcotic. A farrier——

Windgall. Farrier, sir! Give me leave to tell you that a member of the Veterinary College holds in equal contempt that degrading appellation and the little ugly mongrel that offers it.

Narcotic. I would have you to know, Mr. Windgall, you speak to an M.D.—an M.D., sir—a regular physician of the University of St. Andrews.

Windgall. Speak another word, sir, in contempt of the liberal profession of doctor of horse, and I'll take your diploma out of its tin box and stick you in its place, like Gulliver in a marrow-bone.

Caroline. Pray—pray—gentlemen.

Enter SHENKIN.

Shenkin. Toctor Parpet. [*Exit.*

Enter BARBET.

From London town,
Where high renown
My skill doth crown,
I've rattled down;
And now present
To your content—
Good sir—your most obedient.

All ills I cure
That dogs endure;
I give them drugs,
I shave their mugs,
I comb their coats,
I cut their throats,
As you may deem expedient.

Cæsar, Fowler,
Pompey, Jowler,
Ranger, Hero,
Neptune, Nero,
One and all
Obey my call,
For faith, sir, I'm no noodle.

At my command
They go or stand,
Pointer, terrier,
Greyhound, harrier,
Bull-dog, ban-dog,
Newfoundland dog,
Spaniel, pug, or poodle.

Strike and parry,
Fetch and carry,
Current clear,
Plunge in here,
Seize that stick,
Bring it quick,
And lay it down before us.

'Mong tribes canine
My skill's divine,
And what all speech
And sense confounds,
My art can teach
A pack of hounds
To bow-wow-wow in chorus.

Hippy. Now, gentlemen, as you are all here, I shall proceed to open the case; but first, a little refreshment after the fatigues of travelling——

SHENKIN *runs in.*

Shenkin. Pless me! pless me! there's a chaise proken down, and a shentleman upset in the water!

Caroline. Heavens! run to his assistance!

Hippy. Call all the rascals together!

[*Runs off, driving* SHENKIN.

Windgall. Take care of the horses! [*Runs off.*

Barbet. Let loose the Newfoundland dogs. Here, Cæsar! Neptune! [*Runs off.*

Narcotic. Lancets! blankets! volatile alkali! peppermint! tobacco! and spirits of hartshorn!

[*Runs off.*

Caroline. Oh, Lucy! I am so terrified!

Lucy (*looking out*). He's safe, ma'am. They have him among them, and are shaking him to pieces.—Well! as I hope to be saved——

Caroline. What's the matter, girl?

Lucy. It's Mr. O'Fir, ma'am!

Caroline. Mr. O'Fir!

Lucy. It is indeed, ma'am; and they are all coming this way, and Mr. Hippy first.

Enter HIPPY.

Hippy. Caroline!

Caroline. Papa!

Hippy. Here's a cursed unlucky affair. We've just picked O'Fir out of the water.

Caroline. Indeed! Oh! I am so happy!

Hippy. You shan't be happy. As he's an old acquaintance, and has just escaped drowning, I can't be so unfriendly, or so uncharitable, as not to ask him to walk in; though I had much rather tell him to walk out.

Caroline. Dear sir——

Hippy. But I shall take care to quash his hopes of you. Be quiet. I won't hear a word in his favour.

Enter O'Fir.

O'Fir. By my soul, this is the luckiest ducking I ever had in my life. Ah! my sweet Caroline! I almost thought I should never see you again. I believed you had run away and forsaken poor O'Fir.

Hippy. Well, and suppose she had, what then?

O'Fir. What then? And is it old Mr. Hippy that asks me the question?

Hippy. Yes, it is old Hippy that asks the question.

O'Fir. And aren't you ashamed of yourself? Didn't you promise me your consent?

Hippy. I don't know what I promised when I was Mr. Hippy of Kensington. Now I'm Humphry Hippy, Esq., of Venison Hall, in Merionethshire——

O'Fir. Then, sir, as Mr. Hippy of Kensington, who was a gentleman, and Miss Caroline's father, I have the honour of drinking your health: and as Humphry Hippy, Esq., who has broken his word, and is therefore no gentleman at all, I shall have the honour of pulling your nose.

Hippy. Help! help! murder! Here, Shenkin! Owen! Davy!

Enter NARCOTIC, WINDGALL, BARBET, *and* Servants.

Hippy. Show that gentleman the stable—show that gentleman the kennel—and show that gentleman the door.

O'Fir. Show me the door! Oh! I see it plainly enough. But I tell you what, old Hippy! I won't see the outside of it till I and Miss Caroline walk through it together.

Hippy. [*Aside.*] Now there's an impudent rascal.

O'Fir. Peter! bring my travelling trunk.

Enter O'FIR'S *servant, with the trunk.*

Hippy. 'Sdeath, sir! what justification——

Narcotic. Really, sir, this inflammatory conduct——

Windgall. It won't do, sir, to be restive here.

Barbet. Symptoms of hydrophobia.

O'Fir. One at a time, if you please [*unlocking his trunk*]. If any one among you has anything to say to Phelim O'Fir, let him say it like a gentleman. I'll lend him a speaking-trumpet. [*Takes out a pair of pistols.*] This is the shortest way of settling differences among friends.

Septetto.

O'Fir. This trigger, if I pull it,
Will emancipate a bullet
That shall set our quarrels right.

Hippy. Where the devil shall I hide me
From that pistol cocked beside me?
I'm in such a cursed fright!

Narcotic. When I see a loaded pistol,
My diastole and systole
Forget their functions quite.

Caroline. Forbear, forbear, I pray you:
Let my entreaties stay you,
And put your rage to flight.

Barbet. Such ill I ne'er foreboded:
For a pistol, cocked and loaded,
Is worse than a mad dog's bite.

Lucy. Oh dear! I'm almost fainting,
With terror past the painting;
I can't endure the sight.

Windgall. That bloody-minded stranger
Sets us all at rack and manger:
But damn me if I'll fight!

Having sung these verses successively, they repeat them in chorus.

End of Act I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—THE PARK.

Enter NARCOTIC.

Narcotic. No dislike to any chemical preparation but one: the granulated composition of nitre, sulphur, and charcoal, called, by the ignoble vulgus, gunpowder. The subsequent process of ignition, rarefaction, expansion, and explosion has too laxative an effect on my constitution. However, still alive and in safety. Who would have thought that, after forty years of pounding, compounding, and decompounding, love would give Nicholas Narcotic an inflammation of the heart? Amor nullis medicabilis herbis. Oh, sweet Caroline!

Song.

Cupid! cease, you pleasing plague, you!
No! ah! no! I can't resist him!
Fast I feel a fiery ague
Shoot through all my nervous system.

Bring, ah! bring, to cure my heartache,
Mild emollient, cool cathartic,
Cream of tartar, rhubarb, aloes,
Salts, and castor oil, and mallows.
'Sdeath! I'm in a raging fever!
Cardialgic inflammation
Boils in this, my great receiver,
(*laying his hand on his breast*)
Like a double distillation.
Hope inspires me—
Passion fires me—
Love pursues me—
Rage subdues me:
Nought can rule me,
Nought can cool me,
In this furious perspiration. [*Exit.*

Enter WINDGALL.

Windgall. Hip! Doctor! Doctor Narcotic!

Narcotic (*returning*). Sir!

Windgall. Can you oblige me with a small quantity of calomel and castor oil for old Flyaway?

Narcotic. Sir, as a regular physician I never carry drugs; and if I did, should have none to spare for a farrier. [*Exit.*

Windgall. Farrier again! There's an insult! I'll follow the little miscreant, and drag him through the horsepond. No—I had better let it alone. I have had my dose of quarrelling from that confounded wild Irishman. Sweet girl, Miss Hippy. Pretty little figure. Fine large estate. Who knows but she may throw a sheep's eye on Gregory Windgall, doctor of horse?

Song.

Oh, if I can carry her!
Oh, if I can marry her!
  I'll leave alone
  Black, bay, and roan,
And be no more a farrier.
A farrier, a farrier—
Oh, horrid sound, a farrier!
  A squire I'll be
  Of high degree,
And fly the sound of farrier.

A borough then I'll ply for:
A title then I'll try for;
  And not disgrace
  The noble race
Of that sweet maid I die for.
Oh! if I can carry her! &c. [*Exit.*

Enter CAROLINE *and* O'FIR.

O'Fir. Oh! the pack of cowards! how neatly I put them to flight! And so your father insists on your breaking your engagement with poor Phelim?

Caroline. He does, indeed; and, I assure you, duty and inclination have long maintained a severe struggle in the heart of your Caroline.

O'Fir. And pray, now, on what principle of moral philosophy does he think himself justified in breaking his word?

Caroline. On none that I know of, Phelim; and really, in that respect——

O'Fir. Och! and did not you use to say that you and I were as good as married, and the devil himself should not part us?

Caroline. I did not say exactly those words.

O'Fir. Not exactly. It was the same thing, with a little difference.

Enter HIPPY, *behind.*

Hippy (*aside*). What mischief are those two plotting here?

O'Fir. But now, as he won't give his consent, we have only to take French leave, and be off to the

next parson. He'll forgive us fast enough when it's all over; and if he don't, I have a snug little estate on the banks of the Shannon, where there's plenty of oatmeal, and potatoes, and dried herrings, and buttermilk; and that's food enough for Cupid.

Quintetto.

O'Fir. Just rest here awhile, till I come with the chaise.

Caroline. The thought of such rashness my senses dismays.

O'Fir. Oh, fear not, my darling; your terrors disarm,
For love and your Phelim shall shield you from harm.

Caroline. My father will scold, and the neighbours will say——

O'Fir. What we'll never hear, when we're out of the way.
In the chaise, with ourselves, hope and pleasure you'll find——

Caroline. And repentance, I fear, as a footman behind.
But yours I was ever, and yours I am still,
And I'll follow my Phelim wherever he will.

Both. By our snug little cot, where the Shannon shall run,
Together we'll sit in the shade and the sun;
Content with each other, we'll wish not to roam,
And forget all the world but ourselves and our home. [*Exit* O'FIR.

Hippy. Zooks! here's a plot—'tis well I'm near:
But soft—approaching steps I hear.

Enter NARCOTIC and WINDGALL *at opposite sides.*

Narcotic. To thee, sweet maid, a patient kneels,
Who cannot speak how much he feels (*kneeling*).

Windgall. To thee, sweet fair, my hopes to crown,
By thee knocked up, and broken down (*kneeling on the other side*).

Caroline. In vain you kneel—in vain you moan—
My hand and heart are not my own.

Narcotic and Windgall. Prostrate on earth, for mercy suing—

Caroline. You are in vain for mercy suing—
These wretches here our plans will ruin.

(CAROLINE *steps back.* NARCOTIC *and* WINDGALL *throw themselves forward into the arms of each other.*)

Narcotic and Windgall. } Flames and sulphur! fire and ruin!

Hippy (*rushing forward*). Furies! what mischief here is brewing?

Hence! or my stick your skulls shall ruin.

[*Drives off* NARCOTIC *and* WINDGALL.

Come with me. 'Tis vain to chafe.
Lock and key shall make all safe.

[*Exit with* CAROLINE.

Enter MILESTONE *and* SHENKIN.

Milestone. Tell your master that Marmaduke Milestone, Esquire, manufacturer of landscapes, waits his pleasure. And take especial care of that portfolio.

Shenkin. I shall exert, sir, look you, all tue care, and figilance, and circumspection apout it.

[*Exit*.

Milestone. That fellow's an uncivilised goat—a mountain-savage—a wild man of the woods. Wants shaving and polishing. As much in need of improvement as the place he inhabits. Great capabilities here. Soon be my own, to clump and level "ad libitum." Hope the young lady won't prove refrac-

tory. Published many books. Sold none. Bad speculation. Present plan much better. Marriage to a fortune cures all evils except itself.

Enter HIPPY.

Hippy. My dear, dear Mr. Milestone! I am so glad to see you.

Milestone. Sir, this cordial welcome is in the highest degree gratifying to my sensibility.

Hippy. Oh, Mr. Milestone! I am in such a dilemma.

Milestone. Confide in me. I may excogitate a remedy.

Hippy. You may as well think of arranging chaos. You know, Mr. Milestone, by the death of Sir Peter Paxarett, I came into possession of this estate, and never was a place in such a deplorable condition. Not a single apartment in a state of decent order: nothing clean: hardly two chairs alike. Sofas in the cellar, beds in the kitchen, and beer-barrels in the drawing-room. All the horses and dogs invalids, like myself: and the park your own eyes can judge of. The beautiful statues all lost or demolished. Neptune has been lying these twenty years in the dust-hole: Atlas had his head

knocked off to make him prop up a shed: and only the day before yesterday we fished Bacchus out of the horsepond.

Milestone. For the park, sir, make yourself easy. The wand of enchantment shall be waved over it. The rocks shall be blown up: the trees shall be cut down: the wilderness and all its goats shall vanish like mist: pagodas and Chinese bridges, gravel-walks and shrubberies, bowling-greens, canals, and clumps of larch shall rise upon its ruins. One age, sir, has drawn to light the treasures of ancient learning; another has penetrated into the depths of metaphysics; a third has brought to perfection the science of astronomy: but it was reserved for the exclusive genius of the present times to invent the noble art of picturesque gardening, which has given, as it were, a new tint to the complexion of nature and a new outline to the physiognomy of the universe.

Hippy (*aside*). Now there's a clever fellow! What a pity I can't understand him!

Milestone. But Miss Caroline, your amiable daughter. When shall I have the felicity——

Hippy. Ah! there's my distress. I sent for three doctors to cure me and my cattle, and two of

the rascals have fallen in love with her. And besides, she has a wild Irishman of a lover that was going to shoot us all this morning, one after another.

Milestone. Rivals! My blood boils at the idea. Bury the doctors in their own mortar. Don't like the thought of the Irishman (*aside*).

(*Bell without.*)

Hippy. There's the dinner bell.

Milestone. Dinner-bell! refreshing sound!

Duet.

Milestone. All my troubles disappear,
When the dinner-bell I hear,
Over woodland, dale, and fell,
Swinging slow with solemn swell—
The dinner-bell! the dinner-bell!

Hippy. What can bid my heart-ache fly?
What can bid my head-ache die?
What can all the ills dispel,
In my morbid frame that dwell?
The dinner-bell! the dinner-bell!

Both. Hark!—along the tangled ground,
Loudly floats the pleasing sound!

Sportive Fauns to Dryads tell,
'Tis the cheerful dinner-bell!
The dinner-bell! the dinner-bell!

[*Exeunt.*

Enter O'FIR.

O'Fir. Now, my sweet mountain-tulip! Ah! she's off by herself. Here's a disaster. Och! as I came along I heard the dinner-bell going: and I dare say there she is among all the ragamuffinly doctors. I'll just walk in and stir up a quarrel, and carry her off in a hubbub: and if old Hippy proves obstreperous, I shall be apt to serve him as I did the Tipperary tailor.

Song. O'FIR.

A tailor called on me, and, scraping his legs,
As one morning I sate o'er my muffin and eggs,
Says he: 'Here I've brought you a little account,
And I'll be mighty glad to receive the amount.'

Says I: 'My sweet soul,' and I shrugged up my brow,
'I don't find it convenient to pay it just now.'

'You had better,' says he, 'for your own little sake,
Or perhaps you won't relish the measure I'll take.

'I must have the money, so make no appeals;
Or I'll lay you, my honey, next week by the heels.'
Says I: 'For my heels I can't answer, I trow,
But I'll just give you now a soft taste of my toe.'

So I kicked him downstairs, in the midst of his threats;
Which you see is a new way of paying old debts;
'Now,' says I, 'you've just learned, without any demur,
The footing you stand on with Phelim O'Fir.'

Enter BARBET.

Barbet. Insufferable insolence!—intolerable outrage!

O'Fir. Who are you, my little parboiled potato?

Barbet. My name is Barbet.

O'Fir. Ah! the dog-doctor. Something's the matter. You've swallowed a distemper pill.

Barbet. No, sir; I have been insulted, grossly insulted by an upstart physician. Swore he would not dine in my company. Said I should go to the steward's table. (*Aside.*) Here's a man that will shoot him, if I can touch his feelings. He has been making love to Miss Caroline.

O'Fir. Then I'll clap an extinguisher on the farthing rushlight of his life. I'll put an end to his being, a period to his existence, and a termination to his days. I'll revenge your quarrel on one condition.

Barbet. Name it.

O'Fir. Let all the dogs out of the kennel, and turn them into the dining-room.

Barbet. I will.

O'Fir. Immediately.

Barbet. This instant.

O'Fir. About it, my hero! Oh! I'll worry 'em finely.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—THE DRAWING-ROOM.

HIPPY, CAROLINE, MILESTONE, NARCOTIC, *and* WINDGALL *discovered at table.* CAROLINE *between* MILESTONE *and* NARCOTIC: *both paying her great attention.* SHENKIN *and other servants waiting. Welsh harp without.*

Enter O'FIR.

O'Fir (*advancing to the table and filling a glass of wine*). My best respects to all this amiable company.

Hippy. Give me leave to tell you, sir, this is a very unwelcome intrusion.

O'Fir. Be quick!—half a minute. I've two objects in coming here: to take away my wife and pay my respects to the doctor. Dr. Narcotic, I am your most obliged and obedient humble servant (*pulls off* NARCOTIC'S *wig and puts it in his pocket*).

Narcotic. Sulphur and iron! what do you mean, you monster? (*jumping up with the table-cloth under his chin, oversets the dinner service*).

Hippy. Phew! here's all hell let loose.

Barbet (*without*). Cæsar! Jowler! Neptune! Pompey!

O'Fir. Come along, my jewel!

[*Takes* CAROLINE's *hand. Exeunt* O'FIR *and* CAROLINE. *Dogs run on the stage and put to flight the rest of the party.*

Enter MILESTONE.

Milestone. Oh! that infernal Irishman and his pack of hell-hounds! My portfolio torn to pieces! My plan for Lord Littlebrain's park rent into a million of atoms!

Enter NARCOTIC.

Narcotic. Where the devil's my wig?

Enter BARBET.

Barbet. Ha! ha! ha! See what you get by sending me to the steward's table.

Narcotic. Oh, you dwarf laurel bolus!

Enter HIPPY.

Hippy. Where's my daughter? Where's Dr. Narcotic? Doctor! Doctor! feel my pulse! I'm in the last stage of a galloping consumption!

Enter WINDGALL (*with one skirt to his coat*).

Windgall. Ruined! ruined! pocket and pocket-book carried off by a mastiff!

Barbet. I'll help you to that (*gives* WINDGALL *the pocket-book*).

Enter SHENKIN *and* LUCY.

Shenkin. Please, your honour, look you, Miss Lucy and myself have a creat inclinations to pe married.

Lucy. Yes, your honour.

Hippy. Go to the devil together.

Enter O'FIR *and* CAROLINE.

O'Fir. Give me leave, Mr. Hippy, to introduce to you Mrs. O'Fir.

Hippy. Oh, you disobedient vixen!

O'Fir. Hark ye, Mr. Humphry Hippy! You gave me your daughter when I was richer than you, and when the tables turned you wanted to take her away. I have just obtained possession of what is fairly my own, and want none of your dirty estate.

Caroline. Father, won't you forgive me?

Hippy. Caroline! Caroline! I can't part with you, you jade, though you've disappointed my hopes of seeing you Mrs. Milestone. But I begin to suspect I have been more in the wrong than you, so let us take hands and be friends.

O'Fir. Now you're old Hippy again.

Milestone. Very pretty treatment this for Marmaduke Milestone, Esquire!

O'Fir. My dear sir, I'll give you satisfaction immediately.

Milestone. Sir, I am much obliged to you: I am satisfied.

O'Fir. And when I've given old Pestle his wig, I hope he'll be satisfied.

Narcotic. No, sir, I shall not be satisfied till I have first asked our friends here if they will give a retaining fee to the Three Doctors.

FINALE.

Hippy. Quick the dinner bring again:
O'Fir. And uncork the old champagne.
Caroline and *Lucy.* All disasters now are past:
Here we meet in peace at last.

Windgall and *Barbet.* Let us hope, for fees, to you,
Not in vain the Doctors sue.

Narcotic. All they ask, to crown their cause,
Is one dose of your applause.

Chorus.

All they ask, to crown their cause,
Is one dose of your applause.

[THE END.]

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO. LTD., LONDON
COLCHESTER AND ETON